FAMOUS MONSTERS® OF FILMLAND

To all our friends and supporters and especially to Famous Monsters of Filmland fans everywhere — our sincere fangs for allowing us to share the magic of this magazine with you these past 16 years. And while the title of our series has ended, our commitment to you and the terrorrific fun of classic Horrorwood will continue on in the pages of FREAKY MONSTERS. We have not yet begun to fright and the beast is yet to come! — Ray and Connie

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

50 years! 250 issues! And now, dear fiends, it's time to close the lid. Time to say adieu. Au revoir. Auf Wiedersehen. Sayonara. Fsrewall...but not The End. That which made this magazine what it is shall not die. It's essence — it's soul — is merely being trsnsplanted into another body. As Or. Niemann aaid in HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN: "I'm going to give that brsin of yours a new home...in the pages of Freaky Monsters!" Well, he didn't say it quite like that but you get the idea. Herein wa present a few memories of what was, and a toast snd cheer for what's coming next!

The monster craze, circa 1958-1960. We've had this lobster years but frankly have no idea what it's from. Apparently the buxom beauty standing next to the beastie is a boo-ty pageant contestant, possibly a "Miss America" hopeful. The gentleman at left is a charter Famous Monsters reader who is horrified after seeing the hongtestant from "New York" (a small hamlet on the outskirts of Transylvania) reveal her hideous features under the beauty mask she has just taken off. A moment in time captured by a roving camera a half century ago.

On the cover
A collage of favorite friends who have earned their place in our Horror Hall of Fame! (A key identifying the items in the collage can be found on our new website at freakymag.com)

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FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND

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contents:

"There are far worth things awaiting man....than death!"
— Count Dracula

VISIT THE FANG GANG ON THE INTERNET AT
www.freakymag.com or www.filmlanddclassics.com

POISON TO POISON

FROM THE PUBLISHER

50 years.

Half a century.

From its inception in 1958 as a one-shot novelty magazine intended to exploit the release of a package of vintage horror films from the 1930s and 40s to its rebirth in 1993 and its rebirth in 2004 the life of Famous Monsters of Filmland has mirrored in so many ways the lives of the infamous fiends it celebrated. It has been praised and panned. Glorified and demonized. Heralded as influential and dismissed as irrelevant.

Now on the occasion of this final issue I felt it fitting to provide an overview of events that transpired over the past 18 years. Much ballyhoo has proliferated in horror fandom over the departure of former FM associate Ackerman and his eventual self-serving lawsuit attempt to gain control of this magazine for himself. Thanks in large part to the persistent campaign of defamation, denigration and misinformation about me proliferated by a small but vocal band of internet anarchists most fans have no idea of what really transpired or what was really going on behind the screams. I think I best honor our past by giving you an understanding of how things started and how they got to this end.

I'm aware that some fans might have preferred I fill this issue with cute anecdotes and fond reminiscences about the old days but quite frankly I care much too deeply about this institution to trivialize it in some frivolous eulogy. It deserves better. Like an old soldier, FMOF has suffered mercilessly at the hands of its enemies. It is not honored by celebrating it as myth. We honor it by remembering its service and acknowledging its suffering. The old soldier did not simply die, it was killed.

I'm proud to have extended the glory days of FMOF magazine by another 50 issues plus 2 coffee table art books, a 4th pocketbook, a biography and 3 vintage restoration reissues. It's now

(Continued on page 8.....)

This final issue is dedicated to four individuals whose efforts, support, love and friendship made it possible for me to resurrect FMOF and keep it going often against incredible odds:
Gene Reynolds, my dad Ralph, his companion Arlene, and above all the one person whose love and devotion gave me new life and, most importantly, makes it worth living — Connie
And to all of you, our fans and supporters....you are the best! — RF

A LETTER OF LOVE TO AN OLD FIEND

Ahhh FM! My childhood friend and forever buddy. Oh the stories we could tell about growing up together. Like the time back in 1969 when I was an Air force brat living in Izmir, Turkey. You and I were walking down the street, with issue #54 rolled and stuffed in my back pocket, when all of a sudden I felt a tug. I instantly turned around and to my surprise there you where in the hands of a Turkish man who was staring at you wide eyed with wonderment. Obviously he had never seen an issue of FM before. I yelled "HEY! THAT'S MINE!" and quickly snatched you back from his grubby hands. He started cursing you and I started running.

Or like later that same year when I brought you to my 5th grade class when everybody had to bring something for show and tell. I'll never forget the teacher yelling at us "Robert! With the war going on and all the violence in the world how could you dare bring all these monster magazines to this class room?"... 80% of the classmates were scrambling around my table trying to read you they shouled back at the teacher "MONSTERS ARE COOL!" Yep you and I my friend were the kings that day.

In 2005 you and I climbed up Mt. Fuji. It was miserable but well worth seeing the picture of us together in issue #241. FM. We have been pals for a very long time now and I can't thank you enough for all the good times that you've brought me. It's a wonderful feeling knowing that when I turn 50 in June of 2008 you will be celebrating right there with me by my side.

Robert Slomkowski
Texas

• I've loved being by your side, too. But next time you want to drag me on a trip, how about Tahiti or South of France? Those mountain tops are cooooooold!—FM

CLASS ACT CLASSIC

My first issue of FM was given to me by a friend in 1963. It was issue #21 with the great Bride of Frankenstein cover. I was just six years old at the time but I instantly felt a fondness for the magazine. When FM came out once again some 30 years later in 1993 I felt the same way. I deeply appreciate the effort and tireless work that Ray and Connie put in to FM as I could have easily folded. Thanks guys for keeping the FM spirit alive so that future generations can enjoy what a class act FM really is.

Carmine Barbarise
New Jersey

• And fangs to you for so may years of dead-location and support! (like when YOU graciously provided the mint copies of FM #1, #4 and #6 for restoration and reprint. Many fans owe you a rousing huzzah!)—RF & CB

A DRIVEN FAN!

I remember walking into those old candy stores that sold magazines around the Queens, New York area. I always rushed to the magazine racks to get the latest issue of FM to read that evening on the way out on the long ride to our summerhouse on Long Island! Excited to maybe see one of these feature films in the now almost declining Drive In Movie theatres.

Fred J Lombardo
Arizona

•Indeed! That's quite a trek from Arizona to Long Island. Maybe you should have flown!—Mothra

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

Summer

GRIM AND BEAR IT

I went to the theater at age seven to sae my first horror movie (THE FLY) and I was hooked on horror movies every since I discovered FM shortly after and have baen an avid reader every since I-m now 56 and I will continue to read this great magazine as long as yon cont nue to publish it or as long as I can keep the "Grim Reaper" away Thanks for keep ng this great magazine alive Yon are do ng an excellent job

Ron Loesch
California

• I wanidn't sweat the Grim Reaper. FM is available for free te gnests at neosastands in both Heaven and Heit The only difference is the copies in Heil have all the mait order coupens torn out.—Prince Sirki

EITHER OR

My first experience with FM magazina wasin 1969 or 1970 I was 7 or 8 years old My best friend at the time Don had a collection of FM from the mid to late 60'S When picked np the first issue I believe it was # 46 I was hooked I started my own collection over the next 5 to 7 years I probably had over 30 issues When I moved out of my parents house n 1982 I forgot about my FM magazine collection at their house When they moved they must of pitched them because they were nowhere to be found As the years passed I noticed an issne in a store It was one of the covers with star wars on it I saw that the magazine turned more towards science fick on and I was not into that genre as I was into monsters So I just passed on bnying the magazine at that time As more years passed specifically the end of 2005 I was searching on ebay and wondered if any one had FM for sale Snre enough there were probably 600 or 700 listings on old FM magazines there So I bid on 7 or 8 issues from one guy and won them. I was going to stop at maybe 20 issnes

About a year and a half later I won every single issue from #1-191 plns all the year books and paper backs plns all the new issnes from #200- 242 243 and #244 I got from FM directly by subscription That's how I started with FM!

Kevin Sieget
Missouri

• And we're happy or plaased to have had

(Continued on page 8... .....)

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

Bryce

POISON TO POISON FROM THE PUBLISHER

(Continued from page 6)

had 2 successful runs spanning 50 years. A third incarnation is unlikely. But even if the title is used in some future endeavor, for us and many longtime fans it would be "Famous Monsters of Filmland" in name only.

I appreciate all the support and encouragement you fans and readers have given us. You've stuck with us through thick and thin and we've tried to provide you with the beast in classic horror entertainment. I most enjoy filling our pages with word play, monsters and mirth and I'm looking forward to getting back to that wacky world without the baggage we've had to carry for so long.

It's taken longer than we anticipated for things to get straightened out since our business concerning title to the FMOF trademark was concluded but at last we are able to release this final issue and move on. Connie and I do not wish to discuss certain things at this time. We will continue on with a new magazine series. We appreciate your support but ask our fans to respect others and take the high road if you feel compelled to engage in internet debates with those who are obsessed with denigrating us. Remember...engaging in a battle of intellect with an unarmed opponent is a futile exercise. Hate ultimately consumes its host.

In the past year some notable events have occurred. Ackerman has gone to the happy haunting grounds. Some parties who had a hand in manipulating civil proceedings for their own personal gain have been admonished and/or sanctioned. The value of FMOF as an investment collectible seems to have diminished as fandom appears pretty tired of the whole affair. While I'll always feel dismay that I got staked by a system where justice sometimes bows to the privileged, I harbor no animosity. I guess its natural to expect that when you're bleeding in the water sharks will descend upon you. Thus some things you'll read in this final issue and comments made about some of the people involved are intended to clarify incidents...not damn anyone. Even where Ackerman is concerned I can chastise him for his unwarranted attacks against me, but ultimately I have only myself to blame. I saw the warning signs of trouble with him early on but dismissed them as manageable. For as much as I sometimes want to tear the bolts out of my neck in lament for his treatment of me, I still appreciate good times we had. I did benefit in varied ways from our association, as did he. Ultimately things went as they probably had to go. As Maleva the Gypsy said, "Tears run to a predestined end." Because you fans were affected by the conflict I feel an obligation to explain things you aren't aware of and enlighten you about things you may not even want to know. I don't expect anyone to alter their opinions based on my experiences. But at the same time you should know enough to temper blind adulation. FJA was not a deity. And I am not the Simon Legree some lowlifes have attempted to paint me as. So herein we close the lid, bow our heads and get ready to party anew!

Being fans of classic monster movies puts us in a very exclusive club. While many people have heard of the monsters...few really appreciate them as anything more than commercial comm-*odd*-ities. Once they were mainstream. Today they are "old hat". As a fan you have to be a little bit nuts to love and bond with these characters. As a publisher I have to be just as nuts to devote the time and energy it takes to celebrate them right. But thank Hades, nuts of a feather flock together!

So fret not, monster lover. We are the children of the undead! Those famous monsters of filmland shall not die! Again we will celebrate the eerie-stable frights of old in good cheer and good fear!

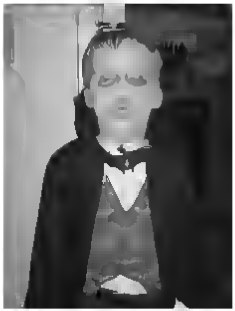
We hope you'll stay and grow young with us. The Ghoulden age of horror lives and the beast truly is yet to come in a FREAKY new incarnation!

Sinc-eerie-ly,

Ray Ferry

Editor/Publisher

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE



Frankie Mullins

you as a fan or supporter for the past 28 or 29 years!—Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde

A SATISFRIED READER

I remember my father coming home from a hard day's work with an issue of FM rolled up in his back pocket. He shared it with me, as we had always watched the classic Universal horror films on Chiller Theater in New York. After that, I used to scrape together my allowance and pester my parents for chores in order to buy the latest copy of FM!

These days, due to all that twisted reading and horror photo ogling, I am quite immersed in the horror genre as a published author of the macabre! Famous Monsters of Filmland was a direct influence on the creature I am today! What is wonderful is that I have a 13-year old son who I am now able to share FM with! We go to conventions together, watch the monster films on DVD and go through the latest pages of FM. It's a great way for us to bond and now he's writing terror poems and fangtastic stories just like me! Like the family of Frankenstein those horrible secrets and myths have been passed down from generation to generation! Long live all our favorite monsters!

Darren Franz
New York

• We've always been pleased to provide a unique service to our fans...time shares!—Mr. Filby

STILL READING

I have been reading Famous Monsters of Filmland every since I was a teenager. I am 52 years old now and I still buy copies from my local book store!!!!

Curtis Hinton Jr.
Ohio

• And now you can get your monster fix in

the pages of FREAKY MONSTERS, the new magazine for jean-agers and groan-ups!—RF

MAKEUP FAN

I was about 9 or 10 in the early sixties when I was introduced to FM. I got the Dick Smith makeup magazine from Captain Company. I still have it and I might add it is still in good condition. Congratulations on your 50th year. I'm still 3 years older than you but we only got better with age. In the words of the late Sir Graves Ghastly: Happy Haunting"

Joel D. Risberg
Michigan

• That makes you — what? 53 or 54?—Dracula

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

Richard LeMay

RIGHT OF PASSAGE

I am only 23 years old so I was not around during the heyday of Famous Monsters. However, my uncle was and when I was around 12 years old I was taken to his house for the first time and I was able to go through his collection of Famous Monsters mags. Since that point I've maintained an strong interest in horror and Famous Monsters. I go to horror conventions three times a year, and I've even started a collection of Famous Monsters magazines myself. Thank you for passing the legacy of horror to a new generation!

Nathan Roberts
Maryland

• Sounds like a scene right out of an old horror movie: "Okay, son. You've reached your twelfth year. It's time to go to uncle's and see the family. Famous Monsters collection!" Glad to have you with us!—Connie

PLACES OF HONOR

I've been a fan all my life. When I was about 10 years old my name sp

peared in the "You Axed For It!" section. I can't remember what issue number it was but the picture was the "eye ball in the shoulder" scene from THE MANSTER. I also appeared in issue #222 in the "Wanted More Fans Like!" section. I was wearing the Tor Johnson mask. You can tell I'm a fan when my screen name is a hybrid of a certain movie and star I learned about a long time ago in the pages of FM.

Gregory G McAndrews
New York

• Ah, the old "eye ball in the shoulder" bit. Works every time!—Maxwell Smart

FAITHFUL FIEND

I remember sitting at home as a teen ager watching the latest Creature Feature on late Friday nights with Famous Monsters of Filmland in hand. The thrills of the Wolf Man, Frankenstein, Mummy and The Creature from the Black Lagoon! With the revival of Famous Monsters the baby boomers get to relive the best part of our childhoods with FM still by our sides.

Mark Brey
Illinois

• And with this last issue, the cycle is complete... Like they say "a new broom sweeps clean!"—Igor

MY MUMMY DUN TOLD ME ..

I bought an Aurora mummy model kit containing a coupon for an issue of Famous Monsters when I was ten. I became a monster-crazed child. That's what happened to my allowance for years to come. I don't regret it one bit.

Dorsey Martin
Florida

• A ghoul and his money are soon parted!—Karl

MONSTROUS MEMORIES

After coming across FM #96 in my neighborhood store I was hooked! I saved my paper route money to buy the latest issues and sent away for many of the back issues. I had a huge collection. I knew what subject was on the cover of every issue! I never got my picture in FM #110! I was a star in my neighborhood for 15 minutes! It was grand! I loved the Mystery Photos and trying to figure them out. Check out FM #110 to see me as a little monster!

Don Campagna
Tennessee

• You see? I was right! And to think they called me crazy!!—Andy Warhol

ALWAYS LOOKING

When I was a child in the 1950s & 60s I would constantly go to the corner mom & pop store looking for the new FM. I would read it from front to back. Every word. Every ad. I have always been an avid monster lover. Looking at some of the old magazine covers brings back so many memories. Thank you for bringing such an exciting part to my childhood!

Diane Lemmerman
Ohio

• Yes indeed. Many fans remember looking for new issues more often than they actually came out. Oh, well, the trip sure was hardly wasted... what with all those Topps Trading Cards and comic books!—RF

NO BIZ LIKE FM BIZ

I remember discovering Famous Monsters of Filmland about 1967 or so when I was eight years old and my older brother would let me look at his copies when he was done with them. About 10 years ago I rediscovered FM and started collecting them. When looking through each issue, it was like deja vu. Today my company is lucky enough to be one of your magazine distributors and we look forward to every chill-packed issue. Congratulations on 50 wonderful years. Ray, Connie, Eric and the rest of the Fang Gang!

Don Smeraldi
MyMovieMonsters.com
California

• We've been happy to have you and Vicky on board and look forward to many more years with FREAKY and FREAKY MONSTERS!—Connie

FROM ACROSS THE BIG POND

Famous Monsters magazine was a huge influence on my life as regards cultivating my interest in the horror genre. As a young boy of 7 living in the United Kingdom, it was always a great thrill for me to see a brand new imported edition of Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine in my local news agents! These issues were very hard to get in the UK in those far-off days of the late sixties, so you can imagine how much of a great event it was to come across one!

I loved EVERYTHING about the magazine from the brilliant photo stills of the best horror actors like Lon Chaney Jr, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi... Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, plus many more such horror icons to the many film reviews. And when I used to stay up late to watch the old black-and-white Universal monster movies like FRANKENSTEIN and THE WOLF MAN, well, Famous Monsters wasn't very far from my mind as I thrilled to these brilliant evocations of fantasy and horror! I could express the same kind of superlative sentiments on remembering when I use to avidly paint those wonderful Aurora plastic monster kits that glowed in the dark!

Now, as an adult, I still harbor those fond memories of buying Famous Monsters in my childhood. Unfortunately, nowadays this great magazine is very hard to come by in the UK — even harder than it was back in the sixties.

I must convey a big warmhearted salute to Famous Monsters for having such a wonderful and long-lasting influence on me as regards pursuing my love of horror genre.

Alan Tonar
United Kingdom

• I certainly enjoyed immensely my visit to your country back in 1991 when filming our 'Amazing Worlds of Science Fiction and Fantasy' video. It's regrettable that events cut short our British distribution as I recall the Forbidden Planet store in London being among our biggest retailers and our British fans as being among our most enthusiastic. I am forever gratified by you and your fellow UK-ers for your support.—RF

THE RIGHT STUFF

It was a rainy Sunday night in the summer of 1960. "Dennis the Menace" (with Jay North) was on the TV. Suddenly a terrific crash of thunder and brilliance of crooked lightening caused the TV to go out. I was happy because just that morning I had purchased Famous Monsters #6 and wanted to reread it from cover to cover. Now I had my chance with my favorite TV show having been laid low by a thunder storm. For the next 2 hours, right up to my bedtime at 9 PM, I was mesmerized by the stories of monsters, ghouls and "creeples". I was a brand new FM recruit.

Famous Monsters continued to fill my life with stories of the once-upon-a-times in "monsterland" right up until its discontinuance with issue 191. And then, like magic it reappeared. Ray and company — from a rainy night in 1960 to a bright and sunny 2007 — FM has always done it right. You have done it even better!! Thanks and congrats!!

Sam Oliverio Jr.
New York

• And to think some people still wonder why I would have put up with so much grief to keep FM going. Your letter sums it up nicely.—RF

BROWN BAGGIN' IT

I am a 39- year-old attorney from New York and started reading Famous Monsters of Filmland when I was about 12 years old. I remember my father coming home from working as a teacher in Brooklyn and tutoring after school, walking in the door in the dark, early evening of the cold winter with a brown paper bag under his arms. I remember the butterflies in my

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

Billy West

stomach knowing he had made the time to stop a comic shop he worked near on his way home. To get me the newest issue of Famous Monsters or even a back issue to fill a hole in my collection. I would stare at the cover for what seemed like hours as I proceeded to read about all these promising new films coming out like Star Wars and articles about my favorite Outer Limits monsters and the retelling of chilling monster classics like Frankenstein, Dracula and my favorite, the Mummy! Somehow the air smelled different back then. The biggest worry was hoping that the late night movies on the local stations might be playing something I had read about in Famous Monsters but not seen yet.

I remember movies like THEMI and WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH fitting the bill. I remember begging to stay up late to catch THIS ISLAND EARTH. It was a magical time as potent and euphoric as any drink or drug in the world. My father bought me those magazines for years and I don't think he even knows how special that was for me. I read so much I helped me to be able to be a fluent reader in school. In college I did well and ultimately went to law school. I am now a highly successful attorney with a beautiful wife and three children.

Although a lot of factors made me who I am today, I dare not diminish the important role Famous Monsters played in opening and building my creative juices which lead to a love of reading and educational interests. Lawyers read a lot. In fact I feel like most of my day is reading one file or letter or legal motion one after the other. That is why when I come home my old and new issues of Famous Monsters of Filmland take me to a relaxing place not unlike the children following Peter Pan into the moonlit sky. Thank you Famous Monsters for being there as I was a child and again to greet me as I became a professional family man. Not many things in life stay put. Famous Monsters has been a rock, one I hope to eventually pass on to my little boy and ghoul twins!

Todd J. Zimmer
New York

• I share your sentiments. "Gimme that of' time real legion! It's good enough for me! '—RF

BACK TO THE FEATURE

When I was a kid growing up in Kenosha, WI, right between Milwaukee and Chicago, I had the best of both TV worlds. I would stay up late on Friday nights watching classic horror movies hosted by Svengoolie on WFLD - Chicago and on Saturday nights I'd watch a double feature of Creature Features on WGN - Chicago, and after that Nightmare Theater hosted by Dr. Cadavenno on WITI - Milwaukee. I loved classic horror movies.

I also loved Famous Monsters. Each month I'd ride my bike downtown to check out the new issue. When I got them home, I'd treat them with the utmost care: careful not to bend their

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

Doug Whatenack

pages or crease their covers. I treasured them. One of the greatest regrets of my life was leaving my collection of Famous Monsters behind when I moved out of the house at 22. For years after ward whenever I visit my parents, I'd always search their basement and closets for my precious "monster magazines." I never found them but luckily the horror film gods were smiling upon me.

A few years ago, long after I moved to the Washington, D.C. area, I was browsing Second Story Books' sidewalk sale and spotted a box of assorted magazines. After a minute of digging through the box I spotted them: "FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND!"

My hands started perspiring, my pulse raced. There, in the box of discarded old magazines were plastic sleeve-covered issues 31, 34, 36, 38, 39, and the 1966 Yearbook. Trying to appear non chalant and conceal my nervousness, I grabbed them and asked the person working the stand how much they wanted for them. "Uhhh... I don't know..." he said. "How about $2.00 each?" I almost choked when I replied, "Sure." I pulled $10 out of my wallet and paid for them. The clerk put them in a bag and I nearly snatched them from his hand. I walked to the subway with my treasure.

Jay Pascucci
Virginia

• Ummm, I think you owe that vendor two dollars. —RF

SURPRISE!

I had to confess to my wife the other day that she was not my first love. Famous Monsters was and still is.

Verne Pickford
Canada

• Be sure and let us know your new address so you won't miss any new issues in the future! —Connie

PRAYING FANTIS

Famous Monsters showed us that something that celebrates movies and actors of the past so they will never be forgotten when we grow up is a wonderful thing. I have used this mag as a reference so that I can remember the name of movies I want on DVD. I will always treasure this magazine and pray

I can buy the issues I want. Thank You for the great job, and be blessed.

William Medina
New York

• Fangs for the kongpliments. Like we say at the dinner table when we eat at The Fly's house "fetus spray."—Francois Delambra

BRAIN DRAIN

I can't remember where or when I first encountered FM (it has been almost 50 years) but I have been reading since #1, mostly borrowed copies since I wasn't allowed to buy them or even read them openly ("they'll rot your brain" I was told). Though every so often I would dare the fates and buy an issue, stashing it in my room, reading it over and over, savoring each photo, each film fact, until I was found out and the forces of Werthamism won again.

FM was the best (sorry CoF fans). I am now a proud possessor of a complete run of FM (well, except MT Graves). Whenever I read through an old issue, the musty smell evokes memories of being 10 years old again. Now if I can only remember where did I put those Horror Monster cards?

Lawrence Lerner
New York

• Having trouble remembering things, eh? Might it be because reading FM has rotted your brain??!!!—Senator Powers

IT PASTE TO SAVE

I first got hooked on FM as a kid in the early 1960s. I was about 9 years old and I bought my first copy from the local candy store in my neighborhood in Newark, N.J. I had always been a horror film fan to the extent that when my parents

(Continued on page 46.....)

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

Jim and Leslie Vanhollebeke

THE SHOCK OF THINGS THAT WERE

from shock! films to schlok films, cards to conventions, triumph to treachery, we look back at where we came from and how we got here.

retrospective by frank leigh & ray ferry

Cooper's re-union — Shock Rocker Alice Cooper is beside himself in a photoshopped depiction which accompanied an interview with the legendary performer aptly titled "Alice In Monsterland" as it first appeared in Famous Monsters of Filmland No. 226.

Luna still ticks in 1993. The endearing Carroll Borland won our honored guest of the 1993 FM 35th Anniversary World Convention. Such a sweet lady!

A tribute to MOM by Gene Reynolds. A month in the making and fully crafted by hand, this life size statue stood in the dealers' room as an homage to the ones who created the creature collecting craze!

It was 19 years ago that I opened the door of the mausoleum that held the mortal remains of Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine and unleashed it once again upon an unsuspecting world. Admittedly, things didn't go as I had planned or hoped. What might have been was dashed because I succeeded too well and trusted too much. But despite the hardships that cast a pale over more than a decade of my life, my association with FMOF has been pleasant, enjoyable, rewarding and remarkable. It has afforded me the opportunity to meet and work with numerous personalities I have long admired. It has taken me to fascinating places, exposed me to wonders and allowed me to educate and entertain thousands of fans around the world — a responsibility I have been honored by. —RF

Thanks in large part to a relentless campaign of misinformation and character denigration perpetuated by a small but vocal band of "internet anarchists", most fans have never heard the truth about what really happened between RF and FJA. Ray always kept from talking about that in these pages. While I have only recently joined the Fang Gang, I am well versed in the drama. Now, on the occasion of FMOF's 50th anniversary and the end of its long and bumpy revival, we share some history and observations with you and — while not every remembrance is pleasant — they are equally important in appreciating what FMOF was and what its real legacy is. —FL

Note: This article contains both personal recollections as well as information obtained from public records. This overview of events and incidents as set forth below was compiled from the personal experiences of Ray and Connie. Any conclusions expressed herein represent their personal opinions based on their knowledge and experiences.

was you dere, sharley? *

The multitude of fans who left Crystal City Virginia after attending the 3-day Famous Monsters of Filmland 35th Anniversary Convention made their way home with a renewed sense of fulfillment and anticipation of a new era of nostalgic fun. The quirky little pulp magazine they cherished as adolescents in the 1960s had returned and its pages promised to envelope them in a warm blanket of fellowship and favorite fiends.

But the novel little magazine about monsters was destined to become itself a victim terrorized and tormented by a monster older than history... greed.

What follows is a bat's eye view of how FMOF came to be and how it came to end. The story is as twisted and convoluted as any good tale of terror should be. So much so that the words of Edward Van Sloan spoken in forward to James Whale's FRANKENSTEIN of 1931 echo strongly. "This is a story we think will thrill you. It may shock you. It might even horrify you." Take it, if you will, as a life lesson learned — the best laid plans of mice and men..."

born to be mild

It's common knowledge that FMOF began life as a one-shot — an opportunity to exploit the release of the "Shock!" films package from Columbia Pictures to the fledging medium of television. The package of 50 long-unseen-in-theaters features from the Universal Studios vault represented a unique diversion in television. By the late 1950s

* For the benefit of our young readers, this was a signature phrase of old-time radio character Baron Munchausen, created and performed by legendary comedian, Jack Pearl.

The Children of the Fight — Some of the less flamboyant attendees of our 1993 gala posing with FM #200. Too bad they couldn't have taken the time to get themselves some costumes and really gotten into the spirit! (Our apologies that we don't know your names, but we're sure you know who you are! Write us freakymag.com and we'll identify you in an upcoming issue of Freaky Monsters!

television was dominated by three main players supported by numerous local affiliates whose programing consisted largely of syndicated shows distributed by the main networks. CBS NBC and ABC produced mostly half hour comedies and some hour long dramas which became immensely popular across the nation.

"shock" full of nuts

By 1958 America was knee-deep in the process of redefining itself after a hard-fought World War and did so under a cloud of apprehension cast by the omnipresent fear of nuclear devastation Like the America of the Roaring Twenties did after World War I, the America of the 1950s cast off many of the shackles of tradition and conservatism It had faced the threat of destruction and now embraced a "enjoy life while you can" philosophy The growing television industry fed an insatiable appetite for entertainment and its invasive presence in homes gave it unprecedented influence It was against this backdrop of a need for something new and the quest to explore and break the taboos of old that Columbia released the "Shock!" package to television. Early on, psychologists and politicians warned of the debilitating effects that public airing of horror films would have upon society Even when they were first released in theaters back in the 1920s and 30s films like FRANKENSTEIN and DRACULA were panned as appealing mostly to decadence. But the stage was set.

Drive in theaters — which had become a retreat for teenage audiences — had already adopted a new breed of horror/sci fi entertainment intended to thrill moviegoers by pushing the envelope in depicting more graphically rendered violence thus quenching the thirst for excitement Yet although the Ghoulden age horror films were tame even by 1950s standards their airing on TV gave some cause for concern

Recognizing the potential backlash from advertisers against programming that might tarnish their images and damage sales appeal, local networks scheduled the "Shock!" films for late night airings and —in order to present the movies in a less offensive "tongue-in cheek" atmosphere — local affiliates dipped into their staff work force and often drafted

Premiring the 1995 Son of Famous Monsters Convention the morning of the first day on the "Good Day LA" show. (Below) Editor Ferry's first encounter with Robby the Robot of the home of owner Bill Malone in August, 1990. That's Gort from DAY THE EARTH STOOO STILL in the background. An interview with Robby didn't really fit as a feature part of our HOORAY FOR HORRORWOOO video, but RF was fond of Robby, Bill Malone was willing to let us video tape and RF figured if he found Robby fascinating, so would a score of other fans. Read all about it in "Life Is Bef A Scream!"

one of their more daring employees to act as an on-screen host for shows often titled 'Nightmare Theater', 'Chiller Theater' or most popularly, "Shock Theater". The formula worked. Columbia had its successful marketing package: the local affiliates had an inexpensive source to fill late night airtime and Mr. and Mrs. Suburbia had a novel and titillating 60 minutes of entertainment after the drudgery of the work week. Everyone was satisfied — except the one element of suburbia few had thought about.

The members of Junior Suburbia (or Suburbanites-In-Training) were not handicapped by having to thoughtfully discard values of the past. They had been born into a society where a new order was already in formation and they weren't about to be left out. Too young to sample the vices of adulthood and too young to frequent the theaters where sensational and exploitation films had become the new vogue, they were quite equipped to slip past the bedroom door of sleeping parents and indulge themselves in the "forbidden" fantasy fare of the "Shock!" film shows and their strangely colorful character hosts.

a new boom sweeps dean

In the midst of all this change and turmoil came "Famous Monsters of Filmland". Fledgling publisher Jim Warren repackaged Columbia's "Shock!" promotional material in magazine format with additional movie stills and wire service fotos in a bid to capitalize on what he thought would be a quick buck opportunity. The concept and style that FMOF would follow is very clearly defined and documented in the original manuscript of the first issue. Warren was specific in directing editor Ackerman and Warren's notations make it apparent that he was the one running the show.*

But just as it was adolescents who became the unintended but primary audience for the late night 'Shock! Theater' shows being aired, so too this same age demographic became the principal purchasers of the magazine devoted to these shows — Famous Monsters of Filmland. While the sale of FMOF was not restricted from this young audience, many of the photographs and the horrific nature of the subject matter itself were frowned upon by families and schools, making the appeal of the magazine much greater. Since parents and teachers didn't want the kids looking at pictures of vampires, werewolves and other assorted creatures, the monsters' 'coolness quotient' increased exponentially.

In short order other contenders entered the monster magazine arena and —while each had its appeal — Famous Monsters of Filmland remained the most popular title for one primary reason: it had (for much of its first decade at least) the best covers and bigger and better reproduced photos than any of the others. The photos piqued the curiosity of young readers to explore unseen titles and provided a hands-on visual reference of films they had seen at a time long before home video existed and the only opportunity to "own" your own copy of a film was in shortened 8mm home movie editions distributed by Castle Films and Blackhawk.

By the mid-60s the monster craze had peaked. The hippie movement, the Vietnam War, the Beatles, James Bond and Playboy dominated pop culture. Warren Publishing had diversified into "horror comics" magazines and Famous

The importance of being Urn-est — Gene, Ferry and RF at the top of the tower next to the mortal remains of "Dracula" creator, Bram Stoker and his son. Memories of the once happy times and adventures the three shared together.

Monsters of Filmland was relegated to a supporting role helping to move the other, more popular titles as well as the company's mail order business FMOF continued on through 1981 at which time Warren Publishing suddenly and mysteriously folded.

sweet screams are made of these

During the decade from 1980 through 1990 many charter readers of Famous Monsters of Filmland were approaching middle age Film icons STAR TREK and STAR WARS had given a major boost to the popularity of fan conventions. Fans congregated at gatherings which often featured guest appearances by former stars of the SF genre happily greeting admirers and signing autographs amidst a forest of collectors and dealers The hobby of monsters memorabilia collecting quickly became mainstream business Movie posters, lobbycards promotional premiums and vintage toys which had little dollar value suddenly became high-priced antiques as inventory shrank and interest in acquiring such treasures spiked among nostalgia-hungry boomers

During that time much of the mythology of Famous Monsters of Filmland in general and its first editor in particular was spawned — a novel combination of invention, yearning and colorful exaggeration about the heyday of the magazine woven, primarily, by its first editor

basic instincts

It was against this background in the Fall of 1990 that Ray Ferry — assisted by longtime friend Gene Reynolds and several others — took the first faltering steps toward a full scale revival of Famous Monsters of Filmland. A chance meeting of Ackerman and Ferry resulted in the production of two well-received video documentaries — HOORAY FOR HORRORWOOD and AMAZING WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY Following the videos, Ferry produced several sets of Famous Monsters themed trading cards intended to provide fans with a colorful assortment of art and notations celebrating the glory days of the magazine While the videos and card sets were not really profitable, the prospects looked hopeful so he continued.

By the Fall of 1992 Ferry and Reynolds decided to go out on a limb and sponsor a world convention celebrating the 35th Anniversary of FMOF magazine Once again a "new" issue of Famous Monsters of Filmland — the first in over a decade — was released and like its 1958 counterpart was conceived to be a "one shot" — a single issue for distribution to convention goers But as time went on Ferry began to realize that support was strong enough to try a revival of regular publication In reliance upon Ackerman's enthusiastic promises to give his full cooperation to a relaunch, Ferry and Reynolds relocated to California and put everything they had into a revival of the magazine.

■ In 1994 Ferry released a limited-edition publication of the actual mimeographed manuscript for Famous Monsters of Filmland #1 with the proceeds all going to Ackerman in a bid to supplement Ackerman's income issues at a time when his mainstream FM hadn't yet produced a profit. RF elected to leave out several key pages from the original manuscript because the solutions they contained made it very obvious that Warren, not Ackerman, was the guiding force behind the magazine. RF decided that since he was attempting to revive Ackerman's image as a "staff" have to have and Ackerman's actual editorial involvement in the relaunch of the magazine was minimal, it wasn't important what Ackerman actually did or didn't do during the magazine's first run. Publishing documentation that refuted Ackerman's role of FM's creation was deemed counterproductive — a decision Ferry later realized was a big mistake.)

For the average fan, the return of Famous Monsters of Filmland was the reuniting with a favorite old friend. A reunion with childhood. Ferry—as a charter member of that club — appreciated the whole experience from a novice point of view rather than as a diehard collector or historian. Ferry reworked the magazine into a time machine to share the Ghoulden age classics with a new generation who were being weaned on graphic violence and all-too-real imagery in "modern" culture.

the same only different

Ferry's involvement and contributions to the revived FMOF were minimal from the start. Ferry learned early on that Ferry didn't care very much about the magazine. What he did care about was the notoriety that his association with the magazine provided him. So he demonstrated on opposition to Ferry editing the new issues since he had little responsibility, was getting paid and received all the acclaim and adulation. The arrangement didn't bother Ferry either. Since his primary focus was on running a business and since few fans knew who he was, it seemed natural to let Ferry take the limelight given his age and legacy.

But trying to establish wide circulation was on easy task and through 1995 sales were soft. Ferry was barely making costs and was financing the magazine from what was left of his savings. The decision to run a second convention in May of 1995 was sparked mostly by a need to generate a cash influx to try and grow the circulation. The decision to hold it in California this time was a fateful one. While costs of running the event were less, attendance was significantly less than they had on the East coast two years earlier.

Added to the mix was the slowly deteriorating relationship between Ackerman and Ferry. Ackerman's already minimal interest in Famous Monsters magazine was shrinking even more. He would merely send Ferry an envelope every few weeks with some random stills and the names of local fans he knew who might help write articles. Despite less input, Ferry wanted more money for his association, something Ferry was already struggling with. In order to keep from running up bills for his assistance, Ackerman's role in the 1995 convention was reduced to "special guest" rather than being the center of attention as he had been at the 1993 event. Disenchantment was growing.

once smitten...

And so it happened that, with the convention over and things looking less than spectacular, Ferry's lease on the house he had been renting since 1993 was about to expire and an opportunity presented itself to get an affordable mortgage on a property in the San Fernando valley. Since the monthly costs would be less than what he had been paying in rent, he took it. No sooner had he moved in than Ferry—egged on by a few members of his newest "inner circle"— determined that Ferry must be holding out on him and had actually made tremendous profits. He began making unrealistic demands for more money. During a meeting in October, 1995 the two "had it out" and the next day Ferry called and quit. Ferry was surprised but certain FIA would get over his bruised ego in short order. But he didn't.

Ferry was relieving a decade earlier when he had resigned from FMOF under Jim Warren thinking he should be getting better remuneration for his association with the magazine (even though he was more the editor in name only for much of FMOF's first run). Because the magazine had folded one issue after he resigned in 1981, he was convinced the reincarnated FMOF would suffer the same fate. But Ferry had too much invested in the magazine by that time and couldn't just walk away. Despite Ferry's efforts and the efforts at arbitration by several mutual friends, Ferry would not relent. He had to prove that FMOF couldn't survive without him. Ferry had to prove it could. Since Ray had actually been the functional editor of the previous 10 issues published, he went ahead with FMOF #211 as usual and — at Ferry's insistence when he quit — removed his name from the issue.

Ironically, the only other changes Ferry made in Ackerman's absence was to remove all of the columns and footnotes lauding Ackerman that had previously been incorporated into the issues. Sales climbed. As the magazine began to prosper Ferry expressed his irritation that it was going on successfully without him in an almost daily stream of faxes sent to Ferry. Still, efforts to resolve the problems and hurt feelings and bring him back to FMOF continued but to no avail. As things developed, the longer he stayed away the less important having him back became. To everyone's amazement, the magazine not only survived without Ferry, it flourished.

crazy, am I?

Ackerman was incensed that FM was prospering without him. Over the next year he sent reams of faxes to Ferry threatening him with everything from being blacklisted in Hollywood to law suits. Then in January 1997, with the aid of his longtime friend, attorney JC Appelbaum, he fabricated a million dollar lawsuit based on a poor-senior citizen-preyed-upon-by-greedy young-entrepreneur premise figuring Ferry would surely collapse under the strain of defending himself. The suit was based on a variety of breech of "verbal" contract allegations even though there were written agreements that contradicted every allegation he raised. Instead of running, Ferry hired an attorney to fight the action. Several months later his funds ran out but undaunted Ferry carried on representing himself. He spent the next two years writing and editing the magazine by day and writing, researching and filing legal papers by night.

It was about a year later that things took a fateful turn.

flying by deceit of their pants

A certain Hollywood hotshot with a passion for things monster approached Ackerman with a proposal to produce several big projects such as a TV series, films and merchandising built around the FMOF name with the added incentive that Ackerman could be featured as "Dr Acula". Ackerman was naturally delighted and a deal was drafted involving a major studio. Ackerman gave his new associates his blessing to use the trademark. (But it is believed that Ackerman was

With Ferry as our Sinister Minister, RF as the Beast Man and Brinke Stevens as the Maid of Horror, we staged the wedding of ol' Frankie and his bride at Universal Studios in 1995. The couple exchanging vows were a real life bride and groom which added to the moment.

kept in the dark as to what his new benefactor was really after. His FMOF deal with the studio would have given him licensing interests in tandem with other established and much more lucrative properties. In actuality, the deal was worth a mint.) However, shortly thereafter the party behind the deal realized to his horror that Ackerman didn't own the mark — Ferry did. In fact Ferry never owned the Famous Monsters of Filmland trademark. In Warren's day Ferry was a paid editor. Period. When Ferry revived FM he offered Ackerman the opportunity to become a partner in the magazine but Ackerman declined. He only wanted to be a paid contributor. But now Ackerman was knee-deep in a law suit against Ferry and the deal he made by authorizing use of something he did not own put his new benefactors in a bad position.

But Hollywood players are business driven and Ackerman's new 'friends' were only interested in getting what they wanted at the lowest cost. So Ferry was approached with a business proposal that would essentially let him continue to run the magazine but give away much more lucrative production and merchandising rights. The proposal added the dangling carrot that, by accepting the deal, the Ackerman suit could be made to go away. Something didn't sound right and Ferry declined. It was suggested to him to reconsider because Ackerman had low friends in high places and could very well win his suit even if all the evidence is against him. That sounded ominous yet Ferry failed to appreciate the actual gravity of what was being implied to him.

Then in early 1999 the whole picture changed. The load of self-representation was becoming too much for him so Ferry hired a new lawyer, Thomas Brackey, who specialized in entertainment industry practice to handle the case and upcoming trial. While Ferry still knew nothing about the studio prospect involving Ackerman, his new lawyer learned about it and — as a condition of taking the case — insisted on taking a security interest in the FMOF trademark, he said, to guarantee payment of his fees. Ferry trusted his lawyer who then quickly ran up a big bill which Ferry couldn't cover and "graciously" cashed in on the security lien in order to bring Ferry's debt down so the attorney could continue on the case. While assuring Ferry that he'd get the mark back after the trial once all the legal bills were paid, Brackey then deftly manipulated his representation so Ferry would lose. As if that weren't enough on its own, it came to light after the trial that at least one member of the jury had been tampered with and the judge (S. Petersen) had deliberately altered the wording of California law and skewed his instructions to the jury to favor Ackerman. Either of those things were grounds for a mistrial but Brackey declined to pursue such an action claiming it would be much too difficult and expensive. He offered however to file an appeal of the judgment for Ferry on the condition that Ferry not hold him liable if he failed to obtain a reversal. (The drama is fully disclosed in Ferry's "Life Is But A Scream!")

eyes on the prize

Since it was an absolute that Ackerman never had any

did you know...

Pictured above is the cover for a giant 24" x 36" promotional poster distributed to fans of the 1995 Son of Famous Monsters convention. The full color posterzine was created by RF to promote "Classic Sci-Fi and Fantasy" magazine — a bimonthly publication celebrating the Golden age of science fiction that RF was going to publish as a gift and allow Forry complete reign over to indulge his dream to be the editor of a real super sci-fi magazine.

By the time of the 1995 convention FM still hadn't become profitable and RF was keenly aware that Forry's heart wasn't in a revival of FM. He always wanted, he said, to be the editor of a real "scienfiffiction" megazine like his hero, Hugo Gernsback did. So RF drafted plans for CSF&F magazine. RF intended this publication to be his personal way of thanking Forry by fulfilling Forry's lifelong dream.

RF was certain it would also be a critical and financial success since there was a larger core sci-fi market for such a title and he hoped CSF&F would help ease the burden of the still-fledgling FM. But before the first issue could get off the ground, FJA demanded more money for his association with FM and quit when RF couldn't oblige his demands. A few days later, FJA wrote Forry telling him that although he had walked out on FM, he still wanted to do the new "Classic Sci-Fi and Fantasy" magazine and would work on it without fee until it was viable. Sadly, Forry had to decline, reminding Forry that "You made me the same promise when I agreed to move to California to revive FM." Ton had FJA couldn't held to his promises. "Classic Sci-Fi and Fantasy" magazine would have been fantastic.

claim to the FMOF trademark, Ackerman's lawsuit cleverly never made a claim to it. But after the trial Forry's lawyer, JC Appelbaum — teeth bared, tail puffed — went after all Ferry's assets including the trademark. In the meantime, Brackey advised Ray to stop publishing the magazine. He licensed use of the name to Ray's longtime friend, Gene Reynolds, set up a new company for Gene independent from Ray and advised that Ray continue to edit the magazine without charge while the lawyer filed an appeal of Ackerman's judgment.

Frustrated when she discovered Ray had no money and didn't own the trademark as she had thought, Appelbaum did the next best thing. She went after Gene's company asking the court to award all future income it made along with control of the mark to Ackerman to pay Ray's judgment. Legally, Gene's company was not liable but the judge (the same one who had skewed the trial in favor of Ackerman) wasn't interested in legalities. He didn't like Ferry and made no attempt to hide his sentiments.

To stop Appelbaum's scheme, Ferry was pushed by his own lawyer to quickly file for bankruptcy. But Ferry learned too late that he was being played by his attorney. Since he already owned the trademark, if Ferry filed for bankruptcy it wouldn't be part of the estate and the lawyer could keep it free and clear. Ferry still knew nothing about the studio deal but his lawyer was poised to reap a tidy profit once Ferry was out of the picture. That's where the story takes a Faustian turn.

The trustee assigned to 'administer' Ferry's estate had his own well informed sources and it took him no time to realize what the FMOF trademark was worth. From the start this trustee showed no intention of administering Ferry's estate for any creditors. He had his *own* plans to profit by obtaining the trademark and using it to leverage another, even bigger deal! But in short order the trustee learned that he couldn't implement his plan because Ferry's lawyer held title to the mark. The trustee attempted to coerce Ferry into testifying against Brackey and help expedite his plan to recover the mark but Ferry declined because at the time he ignorantly believed that his lawyer had done nothing illegal. To testify otherwise would have required Ferry to perjure himself. The angry trustee threatened repercussions if Ferry failed to cooperate but Ferry stood his ground. Ackerman's lawyer did everything she could to help the trustee paint Ferry as a mastermind of deception, citing the earlier bearings before Judge Petersen and Ferry's clever maneuver to get the case out of Petersen's court by filing for bankruptcy. She seemingly believed that the trustee was going to recover the trademark and award it to Ackerman as the largest creditor of the estate.

Undaunted, the trustee sued Ferry's lawyer to try to get the mark back from him. And—as promised—he quickly fabricated a circumstantial case accusing Ferry and Reynolds of fraud — an easy task since, while Ferry and Reynolds thought everything Brackey did was legal, Brackey had set things up in such a way that on the surface it would appear there was some funny business going on and both of them would get swept away. The trustee took Ferry's home, all his financial assets, and took Reynold's company and all of Reynolds assets. To twist the knife, Ferry's bankruptcy was denied in a sham Summary Judgment hearing ruled over by Judge A.

The first convention reunion of the Bat-Pack at the 1993 Famous Monsters convention. John Landis hosting a panel with Forry Ackerman, Ray Harryhausen, and Ray Bradbury. RF has always wanted to rerelease the 1993 Convention video plus HOORAY FOR HORRORWOOD and AMAZING WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY programs on DVD but the legal battles have made any such plans impossible.

Greenwald—the former colleague of Judge (you guessed it!) S. Petersen! In essence the judgment left Ferry liable for all his pre-bankruptcy debts while allowing the trustee to keep Ferry's home and all financial assets! With Ferry now penniless, beaten up and tossed out to the street, the battles lines were drawn

And so for the next two years the trustee fought Brackey to get the mark for himself Forry's lawyer fought the trustee to get him to award it to Ackerman, Brackey fought the trustee and Ackerman to keep it for himself and all the while Ferry fought the three factions to expose the self-serving corruption that was behind the entire mess!

hope is where the heart is

It was in July 2001 when quite by chance Connie and Ray first met at a signing for LIBAS at a Barnes & Noble Bookstore in Longbeach, California. They fell in love immediately and since that very first moment they have been inseparable She was very intelligent and caring, acting as a calming agent making it possible for Ray to accept love and hope in place of despair and anger. Over time she also understood the frustrations of the fans who felt like the abandoned children of divorced parents and took it upon herself to comfort and reassure them.

But equally important she had entertainment industry connections and, like Ray, was a fighter She realized that she knew several key players in Ray's drama and together they began to connect the dots The picture that emerged made it painfully clear why all decisions related to Ray's cases defied every sensibility of law and justice. They did a lot of digging and finally learned about the FMOF proposal and who was behind it They now realized that this wasn't just a simple business venture. The FMOF name was destined to get absorbed into an established humongous licensing corporation and the mark owner would make a fortune Now it was clear what Brackey did and why the trustee was so hellbent on getting the mark away from him.

For the next two years Connie and Ray labored relentlessly in collecting evidence of the corruption connected to the Ackerman case and the trustee's pillage of Ray's estate Meanwhile Ackerman's lawyer and the trustee used the media to vilify Ferry, one would presume to deflect attention away from their activities and discredit Ferry

pyrrhic victory

Ray and Connie sent evidence of perjured testimony falsified documents and even forged signatures to Federal and California State politicians, law enforcement agencies and judicial oversight committees in an attempt to expose the schemes Finally at the end of 2004 their efforts seemed to have gotten noticed While they had only recently begun new terms, the two judges who had presided over first the Ackerman suit and later Ray's bankruptcy suddenly "retired" from the bench and Ferry's scheming former lawyer was suspended by the Bar But despite these steps the oversight authorities were reluctant to actually correct any of the frauds that had taken place, particularly where the trustee's activities were concerned, presumably for fear that by acknowledging there

Life after FJA — With Ferry gone, RF's clout in Hollywood actually grew. He was invited to more gatherings and was fortunate to have been befriended by many people he had long admired. (Above) With "the Riddler" — Frank Gorshin — at Barones. (Below) With Custom Car King George Barris in Hollywood. Barris is the designer of numerous famed cars including the Batmobile.

had been corruption in Ferry's cases, a floodgate of law suits by others similarly victimized within the same courts would open. When faced with a tough decision, the politicos played it safe. Better to let one guy get staked than to have to deal with a scandal.

Shortly after the housecleaning Ferry resumed publication of a new version of FMOF. The files once used to produce the magazine had been turned over years before to the trustee pursuant to order but the actual magazine existed not on paper or disk but in Ferry's talents and imagination. He created a whole new matrix and started anew. It was thought the trustee was going to abandon trying to sell the mark but instead, since he'd curiously escaped sanction, he simply ignored Ferry's activities and placed an offering announcement in the Comic Buyers Guide. But by that time many Hollywood power brokers must have been aware of what had been going on and apparently wanted no part of it. After nearly 7 years of battles, the FMOF trademark — the Maltese Falcon of monsters — the unholy grail of greed — was all but worthless.

find reel

The trustee filed documents attesting that he was compelled to close the estate and return the mark to Ferry for lack of any qualified buyers. But because Ferry had gone to such lengths to expose the scheme, the trustee's filings make it apparent he was hyd at the idea. He'd spent 8 years adamant that the mark was worth no less than $250,000. (Curiously, after years of pursuing Ferry's former lawyer and insisting the mark belonged wholly to the estate, the settlement agreement reached between the trustee and Brackey stipulated that Brackey would not oppose letting the trustee perfect sale of the mark and the two would *split* the profits!)

Suddenly out of nowhere an unknown party showed up at the penultimate moment acting on a "tip" and — for a measly $25,000 — the trustee stuck it to Ferry and sold his "interests, if any" in the mark to one Philip Kim. Ackerman's lawyer was furious and tried to block the sale claiming that the mark should go to Ackerman as the biggest creditor of the estate. That's when she finally got a dose of reality. While he appeared to be acting on behalf of Ackerman's claims while attempting to recover the mark, the trustee accumulated some $450,000 by cleaning out Ferry's estate of every asset it had including Ferry's house (the major asset) as well as all of Reynold's company and squandered the funds to finance his legal battle against Ferry's former lawyer, Brackey. In his final expense report, the trustee revealed that he ran up bills of nearly $600,000 to administer the case and after costs of his own attorneys, his own accountants and his own office fees there was zero dollars left for any of the estate creditors including Ackerman! (Nice work if you can get it. Not surprisingly, the office that oversees the trustee's activities found his final report in order and sanctioned his claims.)

Although he thought he was getting a real bargain, Mr. Kim later discovered that there were serious discrepancies as to whether or not the trustee was actually legally authorized to sell the mark and found himself handicapped in not being able to do much with it. He ran back to the bankruptcy court and requested it clarify his ownership rights pursuant to the sale. The court simply told him — sorry, he bought the

Ray, Ray, Ray and Ferry. The plaques are special mementoes *RF* had made to honor these 3 men in a presentation at the Son of Famous Monsters Convention Awards Dinner in 1995. 5 months later Ferry would quit.

trustee's interests in the mark "*if any*, as is and without warranty" and it no longer had jurisdiction over the matter. Out of options, he sued Ray (and Connie to boot) in another court in an effort to get clear title.

Mr. Kim's intent was to clarify his ownership and rights. Ray and Connie's was to challenge the legitimacy of the sale by using the opportunity to once again address the corruption that was at the heart of Ackerman's judgment and the trustee's pillage of Ray's estate.

At first the judge on the case demonstrated a disposition to wanting to examine the evidence and allegations of corruption further. Things were going well until Ray and Connie filed a brief that named several high-ranking judicial and governmental entities who were advised about the trustee's and Brackey's alleged shady shenanigans and failed to take action. They used two words to reference the federal law they thought pertinent to the schemes: RICO ACT. That must have hit a nerve somewhere because shortly after that filing the judge suddenly reversed his demeanor and issued an injunction against Ray and Connie worded in such a way as to essentially forbid them from entering any more evidence of corruption into the record or even mentioning it in defense. More disturbing, the published ruling contained an admonition of Ray and Connie for their audacity in questioning the integrity of prior courts.

But despite now having an edge the suit was taking a heavy financial toll on Mr. Kim and following the injunction ruling he called Connie and Ray to propose an amicable settlement. Since they now knew that regardless of any interest another court might have in considering allegations of abuse of process, the political power structure shields its own from liability and continuing to fight with Mr. Kim would be futile. They agreed to withdraw from the suit and an amicable settlement was agreed to by all.

Mr. Kim made it clear he had his own plans for the FMOF name. He directed that Ferry cease future publication of FMOF magazine but agreed to Ferry's publication of one final wrap-up issue, #250. The settlement agreement also provided for Connie's company, Filmland Classics, to retain and continue to sell the remaining existing inventory of FMOF magazines it has on hand until all copies are gone.

burning embers

After a twisted and hard-fought "re-revival" of the magazine the matter of the FMOF trademark is now finished where Ray and Connie are concerned. But other developments indicate that the saga may not be over for others.

While Jim Warren lost a legal action against Vanguard Publishing for copyright infringement over their "Famous Monsters Art of Basil Gogos" book, rumors abound that he may consider legal actions against others for fraud, infringement and misrepresentation where his prior publications are concerned.

Based on information that surfaced during the Kim case suspicions have been aroused that Warren Publishing may

"Happy Days" — One-time resident Universal Studios Frankenstein Scott with Grampa Munster Al Lewis at the 1995 convention. (Below) An emotional moment at the 1993 convention when John Agar took the microphone to sing a special song to fans in sincere appreciation for "remembering him". "It was spontaneous moments like this when I felt eminently rewarded", RF said.

have been forced into its demise 28 years ago after Ackerman quit there by parties with eyes on its properties and that those parties may have been connected to Ackerman.

In addition Ackerman's name has been discovered as a defendant in a little-known, 20-year old suit by Marvel Entertainment against the publishers of "Monsterland" (another FIA-quit-after-a-few-issues-and-the-publishers were sued-possibly-because-they used-property-Ackerman-told-them-he-could-authorize-but-misrepresented-the-truth situation)

Most curious, however, is that very recently discovered information identifies a connection among parties associated with Ackerman, the collapse of Warren Publishing the sudden last minute liquidation of the mark, and—will wonders never cease?—Ferry's former lawyer!

It is not yet known exactly what went on but as they say in Transylvania, "*Something's* rotten in Horrorwood!"

While the trustee in Ferry's case seems to enjoy insulation from liability for suspected mishandling of Ferry's estate by virtue of his constituency, Ferry's former lawyer does not So—like any good horror movie—there's a lot more skeletons hidden deep in the proverbial closet waiting to be discovered.

i have a mouth & i must scream!

It's apparent now that Ferry revived an abandoned trademark. He created a new derivative periodical He devoted himself to publishing a nostalgic magazine about old movie monsters for like-minded fans and unwittingly became entangled in schemes by Ackerman and others who thought they could cash in after he had successfully reestablished the title

Thanks in large part to the coincidental emergence of the internet in the mid-1990s, general fans have been sorely misled by Ackerman devotees clueless about what was really going on behind the scenes in the now infamous Forry/Ferry" battles As you may have surmised there was a lot more drama then could be addressed in the preceding summary As before, the story of what happened, how it happened, and who did what will be told and documented in a planned sequel book tentatively titled "Life Is But A Scream II *The Curse of Famous Monsters*" coming later in 2010 Fans will find it enlightening. Others will find it infuriating. But everyone who has an interest in classic horror fandom will find it fascinating

In addition to the planned sequel a new edition of the first book is being released. (See page 9 this issue.)

old monsters never die

Of the decade-long fight with his former associate, Ferry commented

"Like a lot of people I ignorantly accepted what Forry told me about himself at face value. Unfortunately he had a bad habit of telling tall tales about himself When he felt snubbed there was no limit to how far he would go for revenge I only recently learned that while I was the most prominent case, I wasn't the first or only well intentioned business associate that stepped in the proverbial Ackerman sinkhole I used to feel like Dr Pretorius in BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN working with Henry Frankenstein to revive the monster Today I feel more like Dr Niemann being carried off into the swamp by the monster at the end of HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN!"

There are fans who question why the disputes couldn't have been settled and all the litigation avoided. As happens in such things, once started other people get involved and they have their own agendas. For example both the bankruptcy trustee and Ackerman's lawyer vigorously tried to stop Ferry's appeal from being heard. Appelbaum's opposition was understandable since, if successful, Ackerman's judgment would disappear. But since the trustee's job was to administer Ferry's estate's assets to equitably repay creditors, if Ackerman's judgment was overturned on appeal there was more than enough money in the estate to repay all remaining creditors in full without liquidating Ferry's home or the trademark. So the trustee's active opposition to the appeal being heard is evidence of a much bigger hidden agenda. Further, the appeal was ultimately heard but Ferry's former lawyer deliberately left out all statutory improprieties that occured during the Ackerman trial that were grounds for reversal or a mistrial thus insuring a failed baseless pleading!

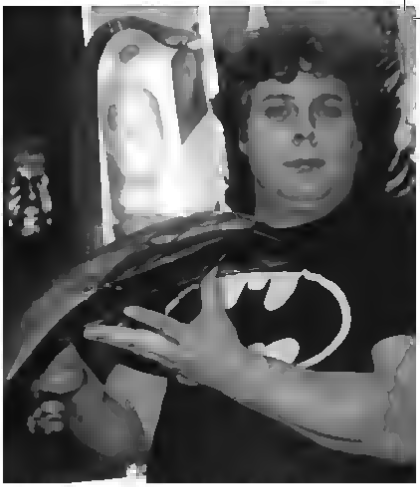
Later Ferry tried to end the bankruptcy by converting to a Chapter 11 and put forth a plan to keep his business and pay Ackerman's judgment. He proposed putting the past behind them and to reunite — ala Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis — in a gala 50th anniversary convention done in the same way as the 1993 convention that started it all. Ray proposed that he would work for free, that Ferry's people and the trustee oversee the event and all proceeds go to a settlement. That way, regardless of Ray's belief that the judgment Ferry won was unwarranted, he'd get his money, the fight would be over, and the fans would benefit. Ray thought Ferry seemed weary of all the legal wrangling and thrilled by the proposal but curiously, both Appelbaum and the bankruptcy trustee rejected the proposal flat out! Ferry apparently failed to appreciate that while he was motivated by bolstering his ego his associates were only interested in profit. Ms. Appelbaum and the trustee had their eyes on bigger money so they weren't about to let the client go soft.

A few years later Connie attempted to intervene and, although Ferry had withered under the stress of his failed scheme and was ready to forget the whole affair, his advisors weren't about to let that happen.

"I spoke briefly with Ferry and reintroduced Ray's reconciliation proposal," she said. "I remember he looked frail but he perked up and seemed relieved and even grateful at the chance to end the fight since things obviously hadn't gone the way he thought they would. But before I could make arrangements for a meeting, Ms. Appelbaum rushed over, terminated the discussion and forbid any future contact. A short time later Ferry lost his home to bills incurred in part thanks to his "supersmart" lawyer and a scant four years later he died, I'm sure without ever realizing how he was being played by the people he trusted".

luck of the draw

When he revived FMOF Ferry united with Ackerman simply because he was told repeatedly Ackerman was the force behind the original magazine. Back in 1992, over Ackerman's protests, Ferry tried to include Jim Warren in the revival but his overtures were rebuffed. For the longest time Ferry thought that Warren was simply too arrogant to be "part" of something he once ran but recently acquired informa-



Gene Reynolds holds the model of the Martian war machine which Ferry represented to visitors touring the "Ackermansion" was from the George Pal film WAR OF THE WORLDS. Below is the exact same model Gene is holding seen being scurried out of the Hollywood Theater in Los Angeles where in reality the papier mâché model was the topper made for a special cake served of a party/screening celebrating the 25th anniversary of the film in 1977. One of many Ackerman collection myths that became legend.

tion has caused him to rethink that supposition. "Warren's attitude toward me may have stemmed from my association with Forry. It now looks like Forry may have caused Jim some serious problems in the past and, if so, its understandable why he would have viewed me as an enemy by proxy", Ferry said.

"The funny thing is that for all I did with Forry, I feel a stronger kinship to Jim Warren. Over the years I found myself facing the same problems, doing many of the same things and making the same decisions he made in trying to keep FMOF viable. I appreciate and understand him in a way I doubt anyone else could. I've always regretted not having been able to get to know him better."

"I always hoped that someday I would have the opportunity to recreate for our fans what we did at the 1993 FMOF Convention and enjoy one last feast all together" Ray said. "But with our resources diverted due to years of senseless litigation classic horror fandom has been overrun by people who are the antithesis of what good will and fiendship should be. What I've seen these past 10 years is a miserable concoction of greed, superficiality and manufactured conventions where fans go to gawk, hawk and squawk because that's all there is. Buy the new Blu Ray of FRANKENSTEIN even if you already have the first umpteen releases on DVD and VHS. Get that new action figure but be careful not to scratch the box. After all it's going to be a collectible! Get on the internet and express your hate for so-and-so because — gee wiz — 'anonymous-guy' said he's a bad person."

"So even though circumstances prevented that dream of a last gathering from coming true I'll carry on and remain devoted to sharing the magic of the Ghoulden days of Horrorwood with all the fans who hold those memories dear. I guess I've been very fortunate that my relationship with our fans through the magazine's pages has always remained very personal and sincere. I never cared to turn FMOF into some Fortune 500 company or to 'modernize' it. I enjoy celebrating the early days of film history and I'll continue to do just that with a new series of magazines."

"it!" — the son of "them!"

Not surprisingly mythology and misinformation will abound for years to come about FMOF.

But nostalgic fondness aside, that which made the property know to fans as "Famous Monsters of Filmland" great is not its name. In fact "FMOF" never had its own anything. It didn't create the characters or the films it featured—it simply ran articles about them. It didn't manufacture the merchandise, masks or model kits fans drooled over in its mail order department—it simply sold items designed, created and manufactured by a variety of other companies. And it wasn't a repository of film history or even facts. (The first editor devoted more space to celebrating himself than the magazine's subject matter and rarely wrote more than broad, sweeping personal opinions about films or personalities he liked or disliked. During its heyday in the 1960s many outstanding directors, actors and producers of the Horrorwood classics were still alive and well but few were ever featured in the magazine with current interviews. They were often only acknowledged with short obituaries.)

But for everything that has been said about IT, it's high time to say what's long been ignored:

IT — that is, what fans refer to as "Famous Monsters of Filmland" — is not a self-sufficient entity. "Famous Monsters of Filmland" is only a title. In the real world "FMOF" succeeded in its first incarnation for one main reason: an innovative publisher with a keen sense of marketing and design, an eye for brilliant covers, and the know-how to produce better foto reproduction than the competition made it great.

It succeeded in its second incarnation because a single charter reader possessed those same talents combined with an entertaining writing ability and never abandoned his love of and respect for the mythical monsters of old.

What fans really celebrate when they celebrate FMOF (or denigrate for those who are fans of dissing the magazine) is in our opinion, a celebration (or condemnation) of two — and only two — individuals:

Jim Warren and Ray Ferry

As the publishers, Jim and Ray, each in their respective tenure, have been responsible for all of the style, content, design and spirit that manifested itself under the name "Famous Monsters of Filmland." Some fans may find this statement distressing but think about it: FMOF has had 3 editors-in-chief in the past 50 years. Forrest Ackerman, Randy Palmer (who was editor in-practice for the last several issues of the Warren run but was credited only after announcement of Ackerman's resignation) and Ray Ferry. But it has been the two publishers that have built and nurtured the core. It is they as publishers who bear the responsibility for success or failure because in the print game it is the publisher that runs the show.

For those who may doubt this to be true—those who cling to the misconception that Forry Ackerman was the creative enigma responsible for FMOF—consider that FIA was the editor of MONSTER WORLD, which flopped. FIA was the editor of SPACEMEN which flopped. FIA was the editor of MONSTERLAND, which flopped. And don't forget WONDERAMA and MONSTERAMA. Different publishers, same editor. Warren's focus on FMOF was right-on but he launched MONSTER WORLD and SPACEMAN without the same vision he had for FMOF. Conversely CREEPY, EERIE and VAMPIRELLA enjoyed tremendous success (without the services of Ackerman as editor) because publisher Warren believed in himself with those titles. Likewise, FMOF succeeded in Ferry's revival because of Ferry's talent, drive and vision.

So if you love (or hate) FMOF, what you love (or hate) is that which is Jim Warren and/or Ray Ferry.

yes — go! you live!!!

That spirit will live on in the pages of "Freaky Monsters".

"I've had occasion to flip through some of the current crop of "monster mags" still being published and all I can say is, it's a sorry lot. My promise to our fans is that we will not forsake them and leave them to wallow through the debris that litters today's classic horror field. Now, more than ever, we re-dead-icate ourselves to being the magazine monsters believe in!" Ferry says.

To some collectors and those to whom Famous Monsters magazine is merely a commodity — a trinket to be enshrined in some cellophane tomb for preservation until it can be

"I'm all packed and I'm outta here. See you in FREAKY MONSTERS!" says IT! The Terror From Beyond Space.

traded for gold — this issue marks a "complete run." But to the "children of the night" who cherish its existence, the world of classic monsters is a freaky and wondrous enigma.

Connie echoes those sentiments:

"Our readers are freaky. Our monsters are freaky. The films they appear in are freaky. Some of our monsters — but not all — are "famous." But all of them are freaky in one way or another. So, what better name for a magazine about the Ghoulden age of freaky monsters than FREAKY MONSTERS!?"

Return with us now to those chilling days of yesterfear. Join with the Fang Gang and revel in the mirth and magic of a time when monsters, vampires and valkyries roamed the earth under cloak of darkness. The sun's gone down. The full moon is just breaking the horizon. The haunting strains of Hans Salter music play in the distance. The candles are lit and the table is set.

We'll be waiting — for you!

GHOUL'S GALLERY!

For this final issue we present a selection of favorite portraits created by the editor of potent personalities who have graced our pages.

A few of my favorite things — The portrait I took of comic legend Phyllis Diller as the bride of Frankenstein for FM #213. Phyllis you'll recall was the voice of the Bride in the Rankin/Bass classic MAD MONSTER PARTY with Boris Karloff. She is one very classy lady and I'm honored by her friendship.

(Top Left) The portrait I created of legendary "Rowan and Martin's Laugh In" star Gary Owens, know to fantasy fans as the voice of Hanna/Barbera's "Space Ghost" and perennial guest star on numerous TV shows. Gary so enjoyed the gag in the foto that he had a dozen 16" x 20" prints made and had the portraits of him which hung in various recording studios around town replaced with this one. A great guy and super-sport!

(Top Right) My "Lenostein Monster" creation. Lenostein is the host of Transylvania's popular late night venue, "The Tenightmare Show". Jay signed a copy of this photo to me as "Thanks. I think."

(Right) A portrait I made of The Amazing Kreskin for his interview in FM on the hidden psychology of horror films. Today Kreskin uses this image as his publicity photo because he felt it expressed his sensitivity to phenomena. Kreskin is undoubtedly among the most insightful and intelligent people I have ever had the pleasure to know.

THE PICTURE OF "DORIAN" KARLOFF

the case of the mystery monster painting from fm #21!

Rolf Armstrong works on the Karloff painting in a posed photo.

mystery portrait

For many FM fans, issue number 21 is a hallmark issue. Besides the usual film summary FM #21 contained an in-depth novelization of BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN and a most unusual behind-the-scenes image — a picture of Karloff in full monster regalia standing by a painting of his character and the artist who created it.

Some 32 years later FMOF editor Ray Ferry was approached by a gallery who was the agent for the artist, Rolf Armstrong. The gallery proposition was to create and make available to fans a high quality limited edition series of lithographs of the painting and a number of accompanying preliminary sketches made for it. Ferry was enthusiastic about the project but unfortunately the overture was made in the wake of the 1995 Son of Famous Monsters convention. By that time, the successful revival of FMOF magazine and the heightened interest in classic monsters collectibles had influenced the heirs to the estates of certain celebrities of the genre and licensing was no longer limited to the studios that owned the film characters or their films. Thanks to litigation spearheaded in part by Bela Lugosi Jr., licensing of commercial products depicting images of the Universal Studios monsters had to also be authorized by the actors' estates and the estates were reluctant to accept subservient fees to Universal for their permissions. It didn't matter if the image was a character owned by the studio or that the actor's features were obscured by heavy makeup. In the case of the monster, the Karloff estate insisted it was in their domain to license. (Presumably Lon Chaney Jr., Bela Lugosi, Glenn Strange and Eddie Parker didn't count.) Since such a collectible as Armstrong's BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN painting had a limited specialty audience, the additional licensing fees made publication of the art impractical and the idea was shelved.

Then in 2008, the gallery sold the original painting to the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, Massachusetts where it is now on permanent display. While copies of the image abound on the internet, some fans may not have seen it and this seems a newsworthy time to promote the image (see back cover) and some accompanying sketches from sample prints received from the original agent.

about the artist

Rolf Armstrong was born in Seattle, Washington in 1899 and grew up in the rugged Pacific Northwest. He moved to Chicago in 1908 and later enrolled at the Art Institute, where he studied for three years under the master draftsman John Vanderpoel. He then went on to New York, where he became a student of Robert Henri. Athletic as well as artistic, Armstrong both boxed and sketched at the New York Athletic Club.

After a trip in 1919 to study art at the Académie Julian in Paris, Armstrong established a studio in Greenwich Village and started to paint Ziegfeld Follies girls. In 1921, he went to Minneapolis-St. Paul to study calendar production at Brown and Bigelow. A perfectionist all his life, Armstrong mastered the technical aspects of modern publishing because he wanted his work to have the same freshness and beaming

Two more unseen sketches made by Armstrong of Karloff. (Top) Boris in full makeup enters the Universal Commissary as onlookers stare in amusement. (Below) Boris carrying a small umbrella to shade himself from the hot sun as he walks to the set.

(Above) The photo of Karloff and artist Rolf Armstrong in front of the finished painting from BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN as seen in Famous Monsters of Filmland issue number 21 in 1963. (Left) Armstrong was most noted for his glamorous pastel renderings of Hollywood starlets and his work appeared on countless movie magazine covers. (Below) Armstrong at a party with friends Henry Fonda and James Cagney.

color on paper as on canvas. He refused to work from photographs, and his search for the perfect model was unending.

During the 1920s and 30s, Armstrong's work appeared on the front covers of many popular theater and film magazines. All the great stars posed for his glamorous portraits, among them Mary Pickford, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich and Katherine Hepburn. Armstrong became a popular figure

A sheet from Armstrong's sketch book made to develop the Karloff painting. (Below) Rolf Armstrong (holding tennis racquet) poses with friends including Boris Karloff (far right).

among the Hollywood jetset, and regularly paled around with notables such as Jimmy Cagney and Boris Karloff. Although his mainstay was the ladies, in 1945 he persuaded Karloff to pose for him on the set of BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN. The purpose of the painting is unknown since its style is more impressionistic for Armstrong who usually rendered lifelike portraits in pastels. Most likely the portrait was a commission or intended gift for the actor.

Armstrong maintained a "fantasy mansion" on Little Neck Bay in Bayside, Long Island, complete with a lagoon and sailboats for his friends to enjoy. He often painted his models outdoors in the glow of the setting sun.

Armstrong was inspired by the glitter of society and he appreciated beauty in people, cars, furniture, fabrics, and, of course, in art. A collector of swords and antique lances, he built one of the greatest private collections of ancient weapons in America. He died on 22nd February 1960 on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, surrounded by his beloved blue ocean and tropical winds.

LIFE IS BUT A SCREAM!

excerpts from the book that shook horror fandom to the bone!

Normally I don't like to talk about myself in these pages. But since this issue is anything but normal, I thought I'd give those of you who may not know some background about my own history and how I came to revive this magazine. How FMOF came to be reborn is possibly more important than how it came to end. Because some fans didn't get to read "Life Is But A Scream" when it was first published in the summer of 2000 here is the first (edited for length) chapter of the book. It chronicles my beginnings and the events that ultimately led up to the revival of FM in 1993. As fans of FMOF go, I'm no different than you. If there is a difference, it's only that my background and a string of fated events led me to a place I never set out to go to and to assume a role I never coveted. I merely followed the road where it led. Besides — the book an infuriated so many of my worst enemies and detractors that that's reason enough to republish it, which we are doing now (see ad on page 9) in an updated second edition which will include additional information I wasn't aware of when the book was first printed. The long anticipated sequel covering July 2000 to the present will be published later in 2010 and titled "Life Is Bot A Scream II — The Curse of Famous Monsters of Filmland". —RF

part one

"Ahh, you young people making the most of life—while it lasts!"
—Dr. Lahos

"Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans."
—*John Lennon*

it's a one-derful life

The single most unique thing about the revival of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine was that it was completely unpremeditated—an act of fate, if you will. Just as the first incarnation back in 1958 was largely the result of fate and luck—with conditions just having been ripe at the time for a "one-shot" attempt to make a quick buck from the novelty of the Columbia "Shock Theater" TV monster movie offerings—the resurrection of the magazine was no less the result of fate and luck—owing to the peculiar combination of my background, my friendship with Gene Reynolds and several events that providence dropped in my lap at opportune moments. To appreciate how it all came together, I'll have to ask your indulgence while I give you some history on the things that led me to the preeminence to be able to revive the magazine in the first place. I find it interesting to note that Ray Bradbury once remarked to me that life is circular in nature and people who ultimately find their destiny are people whose lives take a course full circle back to their roots. The poignancy of this observation is acute in my case.

That my life would revolve around creative endeavors seems to have been predetermined. From the beginning, my interests have been absorbed by art, photography, literature, and music. I've always known my career would be based on one of these interests and actually, because I liked each expression more or less the same, I dabbled at various times in each media professionally, and it is the sum total of the experience I gained from all of these endeavors that ultimately provided me with the skills and knowledge that would be mined to successfully revive as unique and demanding a publication as *Famous Monsters of Filmland*.

the invisible rays that started it all

My love affair with monsters started in 1958. At the tender age of six, my family had taken me to New York City to see THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD. The colors! The monsters!—Especially the Cyclops—all fascinated me. That night after we got home, under the influence of Ray Harryhausen's magic and a pound of salt water taffy and two bottles of Coke I devoured during the screening, I had my first qualified nightmare—the details of which I remember to this very day. I had no idea who Ray Harryhausen was or how he did what he did on the movie screen, but I was hooked on monsters from that point, and as the old classic chillers made their way to TV, I examined each weekly issue of *TV Guide* for any sign of FRANKENSTEIN or DRACULA or any of the old horror films which were being run.

My mother actually enjoyed these types of films a lot and encouraged me to see them, especially KING KONG, which was a favorite on the "Million Dollar Movie" program on our local WOR.

(Far Left) RF in 1960. (Above) The image that first ignited RF's passion for monsters —the Cyclops from THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD. (Below) RF with legendary animator Ray Harryhausen in the lobby of the Scala Theatre in London in 1991.

RF with Hollywood agent Fred Westbrook and radio host Shelley Herman. Ray was Shelley's guest for an hour-long chat about all things monster on KMPC Talk Radio in 1996.

TV network. They used to run a film every day for a full week! The year after 7TH VOYAGE, my parents took me to a local drive-in to see THE INVISIBLE BOY. I remember thinking Robby the Robot was at least as cool as the Cyclops, and I was getting deeper and deeper into my addiction for such fare. Another trip to the cinema in 1959 exposed me to THE MYSTERIANS, and after watching that fantastic giant Godzilla-like robot wreak havoc in the Tokyo suburbs, there was no turning back for me.

A few years later, I was browsing a book rack at the old Bamberger's Department Store in downtown Newark, New Jersey when I happened upon a copy of *R Is For Rocket* by Ray Bradbury. At the time, I didn't associate Bradbury or Harryhausen with *FM*, and I don't recall what prompted me to pick up the book, but I'm sure there was something about the cover art that caught my eye and some attraction to the large initial of my name. It was filled with a number of short stories, which I liked because I preferred them to very long novels. But for reasons I can't really define, the book absolutely fascinated me. It was the first time that vivid pictures formed in my mind as I read the words. "This guy Bradbury sure could write," I thought, and his "Frost and Fire" story became the foundation for my first serious attempt at writing a screenplay. I even went so far as to scout locations. I wore that book out reading and rereading it.

I grew up in a small New Jersey town called Belleville. I was an avid comic book reader of *Superman, Batman and Richie Rich* predominantly. (Why I liked *Richie Rich* I'll never understand, but I did.) I was always a loner, and the comics gave me a world I could call my own. The wild costumes and adventures were much more intriguing to me than the "real" world and, as I presume is true of many of you, I couldn't understand anybody's fascination with sports. My father had a modest classic book collection and I read much of *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, Dante's Inferno* (which I improved by coloring in the illustrations in my father's collector's edition with my Crayolas), 1984, several of Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies, portions of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, most of Andersen's fairy tales, and much of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* all before I was 13 years old.

I've always had a special fascination for history and loved old black-and-white movies, even though I was not much of a television addict, even in the late 50s. I preferred to satisfy my inquisitive mind in more constructive ways. I used to make pilgrimages on my bicycle to the town's Woolworth five-and-dime store and buy the Aurora plastic model kits of soldiers, Indians, gladiators and such (ships, planes and cars had no fascination for me). When a model came out and I didn't have the funds for it, I would look for an open box in the store and take the instruction sheet, which I would use as a guide in an attempt to create my own illustrations of the model. On one occasion, I wanted one of the kits of the then-new Mercury space capsule, but—since I couldn't afford it—I used the instruction sheet to recreate the model out of oak tag and glue in full-scale size. (To younger readers who might scoff at ninety-nine cents being unaffordable, you need to appreciate that was a lot of money back then. I recall having to save for many months to obtain the $1.49 that was needed to send away for a set of plastic toy Civil War soldiers advertised in the back of a *Superman* comic book.)

one fateful day

Like most of our readers the image of how I happened to discover *FM* is among the most vivid of my childhood memories The community I lived in was largely undeveloped and more resembled farm country in the 1950s The houses were in small districts and each of the neighboring communities had their own version of "Main Street" There was a small group of stores on the far side of town, about a mile and a half from my house They were arranged like today s small strip malls There was an Acme supermarket, Nick the shoemaker a Chinese restaurant, and a small pharmacy called the Soda Fountain, which had a lunch counter pharmaceuticals, toys and a tall, wide, fire-engine red magazine rack against one wall (Over the years, many *FM* readers have related to me that they too found their *FMs* in such a store which were the forerunners of today s convenience stores.) Anyway one fateful day in 1960 I went to the Soda Fountain to see what new comics had come in. As I browsed the rack (which was isolated from the rest of the store by a large display shelf unit) my eyes became transfixed by the white magazine with the red letters that blazed my eyes —*Famous Monsters of Filmland*! I picked it up from the rack and thumbed through it To this day I can't tell you exactly why but I felt a tremendous attraction to this magazine! It seemed written just for me. To tell the truth, I don t recall ever really reading it, because issue after issue I became lost primarily in the photographs. I didn't even realize it was a bimonthly magazine I would ride up there every week looking for a new issue

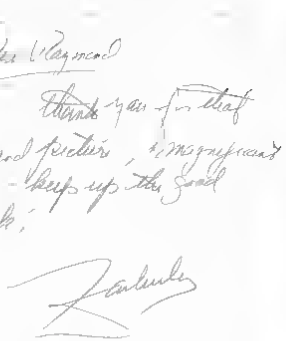
By this time my elementary education for the rest of my life had begun I used to take the family s old Browne box camera and set up and photograph dioramas I would build from toy soldiers I remember how angry I used to get at the "stupid" camera because what I was seeing in the little viewfinder was a great shot and what I got in the developed film didn't match what I'd set up at all! Help came in the way of my father who as an electrical design engineer, used to do some part-time work for a lot of different electronics companies. One of his clients happened to be a chap who was starting up a photographic import company Rather than take money for the work, my Dad took his pay in trade for some photo equipment—an enlarger trays, chemicals, and a prototype of one of the first single-lens reflex 35mm cameras—which he gave to me to pursue my photographic interest

my tor-mentor

Now my imagination fueled by the shots I d seen in *FM*, I started taking to the family 8mm movie camera Each holiday my dad would shoot some family home movies, but he never bothered to flip over the roll and shoot the other 25 feet. I decided to put that film to good use and started to write some two-and-a-half minute mini-epics which I would film with a few of the neighborhood kids. This didn t last too long because they got tired of me bossing them around trying to be a director Thus, the elementary knowledge of makeup I procured from *FM* led me to solve my problem by using my little brother Richard as my "contract player" ("Do what I say or I'll put a contract out on you!") I found that with a little makeup, one of my mothers' unused (I thought) wigs and a few cheap Halloween masks I borrowed from friends, I didn t need other actors I filmed myself in some parts Richard in others, and created my own special effects

RF and legendary shock-rocker Alice Cooper meeting after the publication of FM #227!

"Rose" by any other name — RF with screen queen Gloria Stuart at a party for her art books. A delightful lady and a great conversationalist!



Two prized possessions — the foto and letter RF received from Zacherley in 1962 in response to a painting (done in magic marker) Ray sent in. Zach had the picture displayed as part of his Channel 11 set for several weeks. 25 years later Ray would finally get to work with the legendary horror host as a featured performer in HOORAY FOR HORRORWOOD. (Both originals were stolen in 2003 when Ray and Connie were forced out of their home after Ackerman's collection attempts.)

I recall recording the soundtracks off the TV from a few of the old Universal films like BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, then taking apart my father's portable reel-to-reel tape recorder and rigging up a belt system so I could synchronize the sound with the family's Bell and Howell movie projector as I screened my collection of 8mm Castle Films of those same movies. The contraption actually worked after a fashion, but I got in a lot trouble for wrecking the tape recorder and projector. As it turned out, my fourth "epic" — THE MUMMY! was my last. With the finale of THE MUMMY'S TOMB as my inspiration, I planned a scene where the hero (me) would set the Mummy ablaze. I had taken a doll (a "G.I. Joe", I think) and done a "Jack Pierce" on it, wrapping it in mud-soaked bandages and leaving it buried in the backyard for a week to give it that aged look. This prop would become an inferno for my film's climax. But, for the sake of realism, I needed a moving shot of the Mummy waving that outstretched arm of his as he hinges for the hero, who then uses the torch to kill off his attacker. So, I came up with what I thought was a novel solution—I wrapped my little brother in the bandages and left the Mummy's trademark stream of gauze hanging from one outstretched arm.

The shot was simple enough—film me grabbing the torch, lighting the hanging piece of cloth, shoot it burning until just before it fell off Richard's arm (it was being held very loosely by a piece of tape), then cut to the doll all ablaze. Unfortunately, my mother happened to look out the kitchen window just as I was getting ready to light the hanging cloth strip and, in what I thought was gross overreacting at the time, brought my homegrown filmmaking career to an abrupt halt. Maybe it was just as well, and I returned to still photos and more complex dioramas using the new Aurora Monster models.

artists and models

During those years as I experimented, I read every book our local library had on the art of movies and the art of photography. By the time I entered high school in 1966, I was a fairly accomplished photographer and even had a few paying assignments. While my curious and inventive nature was a constant source of irritation for my parents, I think my father—in a frustrated way—held a certain pride that I at least had a thirst for knowledge. Along with the inspiration provided by *FM* and those old movies, my father's support was paramount to my education.

I stopped searching out new copies of *FM* around 1966. The Soda Fountain had closed, and the new pharmacy which became my source for periodicals didn't carry it. Besides, they had another magazine which proved to be much more fascinating to my 14-year old curiosity—*Playboy*. During the summer of 1966, I started the second phase of my education.

An artist friend of my father's had a small studio in the Toy Center Building in New York. His work consisted of doing very dry technical illustrations and mechanical preparation (paste-ups for reproduction) and some fine art illustration. He invited me to be his apprentice that summer and I jumped at the opportunity. Every weekday during one of the hottest summers I remember, I put on a jacket and tie and took a bus, a trolley and a train to make the 90-minute commute to his studio where I cleaned up and ran errands for him from 8:30 AM until 4 PM. Several times each day he'd show me what he was doing and taught me how to handle an airbrush,

an X-acto knife and a mechanical pencil and the techniques of preparing material for reproduction. For several weeks, I assisted him on the layouts and illustration for "The Beautiful Chrissy Doll" being marketed that Fall by Ideal Toys. I didn't realize it at the time but those eight weeks would be indispensable in the work I would eventually be doing on my own.

After graduating I sought enrollment into Rutgers, the state university more out of need than want. I wanted to go to California to enroll in Brooks Institute of Photography to further my career dreams and because I'd read that a lot of their graduates were able to find work in Hollywood. Unfortunately, Brooks was only an associate degree school, and Uncle Sam (or more correctly Uncle Lyndon) was breathing down my neck. The good folks at Rutgers informed me that I wasn't scholastically brilliant enough and my family wasn't poor enough for me to get in for September classes since the school had to devote the largest percentage of its freshman enrollment to the underprivileged minority. Here I had my first experience with "reverse discrimination."

I had two choices—find another school or chance the draft. Thus I wound up attending Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Pratt was regarded as one of the top art schools in the country, and I was very proud to have been accepted, although I recall thinking it strange since my work wasn't on a par with a lot of kids who I thought were much more gifted than I. It turned out I was right and that Pratt let a certain number of borderline cases like me in to help keep the enrollment up.

I majored in photography and filmmaking but didn't fare too well with the classes since I was already an accomplished photographer and the classes were several years behind what I already knew. I left immediately upon receipt of the news that my draft number wasn't going to be called to service that year.

love of film

After I left Pratt, I worked for a while as a librarian at a New York film rental house, and one of the perks of that job was being able to take home different 16mm feature films on the weekend. There were a lot of Universal, Warners and United Artists titles I liked (mostly old monsters and musicals) and I had inadvertently become acquainted with a fellow who managed a local adult movie theater (this was in the days long before home video when people used to frequent adult theaters with their jacket collars turned up and their hats pulled low over their face). The fellow was himself a fan of old Hollywood, so on various occasions we would screen the films I borrowed on the theater's system on days it was closed. Boy—that used to be a lot of fun. No audience, no noise—it was the best private screening room you could hope for!

the "moe" the merrier

A while later I tried my hand at producing some educational films, but I wasn't very successful at finding any buyers, so I embarked on my first independent production. I was a big fan of the Three Stooges and had an idea to do a documentary retrospective on their career, intercutting classic film footage with a newly-taped interview in which they would do a little bit of the old slaps/tick routines as lead-ins to different segments. I was able to get in contact with "officer" Joe Bolton, who had hosted The Stooges afternoon shows on WPIX-TV and now lived not too far from me in the Paramus, New Jersey area. Joe put me in touch with Moe Howard,

A candid moment with Zach during the filming of HOO-RAY FOR HORRORWOOD. (1990).

and a few weeks later I received a letter telling me he was interested if I could obtain clearance for clips from Columbia, and he could get a green light since he had some restrictions concerning contracts for his new book on the Stooges. I contacted the studio and, surprisingly, they agreed to provide me the film clips. Unfortunately, a short while later Moe wrote to me again saying he couldn't do the interview after all and that Larry had just suffered a stroke. I decided to wait it out and hope for the best, but regrettably Larry passed away and the project didn't seem very likely anymore. I've always felt bad about that, but my short exchanges with Moe are among my fondest memories.

With the film business looking less lucrative than I'd hoped, I turned back to still photography. As luck would have it, I wound up working as a fashion photographer for a small local model agency, photographing portfolios for mostly young, would-be models. I developed a pretty good technique in lighting, makeup and directing, since most of my subjects had little if any experience and I was being hired to make them look professional.

never say die

Life as a struggling, self-employed artist had its ups and downs, of course—particularly in the early days. But I discovered that with a little ingenuity and perseverance, I could survive. There was one particular span of down time I recall when I was behind in my rent and didn't have enough money to pay for the phone or the electricity, both of which wound up being shut off. That left me in a real lurch since I needed to work to get money to pay the bills but couldn't if I had no phone or electric. I discovered by accident that the building I was in had high-voltage DC current lines embedded in the walls—left over from the days early in the century when the city was serviced largely by DC current (before the advent of today's AC lines). These old power lines

One of RF's guest host appearances on "The Joe Franklin Show" in New York in the late 1970s.

were still live so—by running some DC work lights in my small studio and using DC flash units, I could at least continue taking photographs for a few days. The phone was another matter so, after scraping up a few dollars, I had just enough to run an ad in a local newspaper for a week, advertising my services. I listed the phone number of the public telephone booth on the corner by my studio with instructions to call between 9 AM and 11 AM weekdays for an appointment. Then, each morning I would get up and sit inside the phone booth waiting for calls. As luck would have it, I got just enough appointments to earn the money I needed for the rent and utilities and was able to keep working!

networking

A few years later, the owners of an agency I was then with decided to branch out to local live shows and—since they figured I was doing a good job with the stills and had experience in film and staging—I was asked to write and choreograph a 30-minute fashion show which was to be performed at New York's Copacabana club. I jumped at the chance to do something different. Among my non-monster interests was an affinity for old Hollywood films—particularly musicals and comedies. Thus, I put together a mime show which showcased the fashions in a production which paroded the silent comedies of Laurel and Hardy, Buster Keaton and Max Sennett. The guest of honor at that show was New York TV legend Joe Franklin. This was the same year the famed King Tut exhibit was on display in New York and Joe—who enjoyed the old-style Hollywood approach I had taken—invited me to bring the cast on his show and to write a new sketch using an Egyptian theme for some "Tut-inspired" fashions he was going to plug for Gimbals Department Store. Our little piece on his show was well received, and over the course of the next year I did several other shows with Joe, often sitting at his desk with him as an honorary "co-host." We became good friends, and I spent many evenings accompanying him on his appearances about town as a sort of unofficial secretary. One of the things I used to enjoy most was going to Nathan's (the city branch of the famous original hot dog stand in Coney Island) with Joe at two in the morning and wolfing down hot dogs, french fries and clams-on the half shell. (Believe me when I say you have never had real fries or a real hot-dog until you've had them at Nathan's!)

I also spent many hours with him in the studio during his late night "Memory Lane" radio broadcasts. My first on air experience came one Saturday night at about 3 in the morning when Joe was broadcasting a segment on Frank Sinatra. Without telling me ahead of time, he announced over the air that he had a special guest with him in the studio who was a big band and Sinatra authority. He then introduced me by name and asked me a trivia question about Sinatra's career. I was in a momentary state of shock! I knew my music history but was hardly an authority on Sinatra. While I blubbered out a few comments, Joe kept pointing with his finger to a stack of record album sleeves on the desk near where I was sitting. After a moment, I got the message and picked up the first jacket. There on the back in the liner notes was the answer to the very question Joe had just asked me. In my most dignified and authoritative voice, I responded by reading the record jacket notes. Later, I discovered that Joe was teaching me some of the finer points of broadcasting and how to think on my feet. I have a lot of fond memories of those days. I used to marvel at how we would leave his 42nd Street office at 11:45 PM, with him stopping by a large rack of records near the door and grabbing (seemingly at random) several albums. We would then walk down Seventh Avenue a few blocks to the WOR radio studio and take the elevator upstairs, arriving at the studio at 12:02 AM. Joe would hand the stack of records to Artie (the engineer), take off his coat, sit at the microphone,

and start his show at precisely 12 05 without missing a beat or ever once looking at the clock! One to my close proximity to Joe I had a number of encounters during those years with celebrities I had long admired, including Donald O'Connor Patty Duke John Astin, Tony Orlando and others, and found each experience to be enjoyable

I credit watching Joe being "Joe" with teaching me how to act in situations where it's important to know how to behave to make for a friendly and comfortable encounter with someone (particularly someone of stature) you don't know on a personal level

While I didn't appreciate its significance at the time one thing Joe said to me one evening when we were shooting the breeze in his office pretty well sums up my life We were talking about my career and he said "Ray I have no doubt that you are going to be successful in some aspect of the entertainment field—you just don't know enough about the business to fail"

Eventually the talent agency account that had been one of my major sources of work had gone under and I moved from New York City back to New Jersey One of the last accounts I d had while still in New York involved a children's clothing company They decided to stop producing print catalogs of their line and wanted to make live action video catalogs instead I knew I could handle video as well as stills so I talked them into giving me the assignment. That video catalog came out just fine and I realized that I could make a better living doing video at higher rates than I had been getting for still work But I d need to have my own facility because it was too expensive and too risky to keep renting

for whom the bell tolls

Now back again in New Jersey I had to find a way of financing my video company Back in those days there was a statewide cable network that had time slots available to local entrepreneurs and—after looking over the various homegrown shows that were on—I got the idea to produce a local rock-and-roll cable TV series called "Rock On!" The idea was to make it like "Don Kirshner's Rock Concert" but showcasing local talent The fees we could get from advertising and by selling copies of the tapes to the bands would help finance the equipment while I looked for more corporate work During production of that series, I was reintroduced to an old friend I hadn't seen in over 10 years, since when we had both worked in the same Newark, New Jersey department store in 1970

Gene Reynolds was now working in one of New Jersey's largest novelty stores Fred Collins' Mecca Magic Emporium, in Bloomfield I happened to walk into the store one afternoon looking for some props for the "Rock On!" show and ran into Gene there He had developed his art interests and was now working as a makeup artist professional clown (no he wasn't holding any political office—he was a clown, as in circus) and moonlighting at Mecca. Our reintroduction prompted our teaming together on some of the shows, including a Halloween special, where he did a great job of face painting and costuming six people in one hour for a Monster Mash production number Through a friend of Gene's, I wound up working on a project that took me through the last phase of my preparation for bringing back *Famous Monsters* (I'll bet you thought I forgot about why I was giving you all this background!)

The project involved producing a promotional video to be used as part of an employee motivation program for the newly formed Bell Atlantic Telephone Companies. I was to travel with a camera crew to several Bell offices throughout the North Atlantic region and film short interviews with local employees under the common theme of "pride in performance" (how corporate!). I hadn't been on a plane since I was seven had never been on a jet and wasn't too keen on flying at all, but my agenda had me on as many as four flights a day! During the weeks of taping I learned the fine art of business travel and how to survive while working on the road.

# of puns and pundits

A key figure in the video was a local stand-up comic named Wid. His name was actually Michael but I'm told the poor guy was picked up by the local gendarme's more or less frequently in his school days (just for hanging out, not for causing any trouble) and never had a wallet on him so the officers would always write "Without I D" next to his name Wid was popular in the comedy club circuit and had been featured on several of the comedy club TV shows of the day His disheveled appearance coupled with his pun-a-minute monologue punctuated with a mess of "junkyard" visual aids, made him seem like a cross between Rip Taylor and Charles Nelson Reily Add to that he was a nice enough chap with an easygoing nature and audiences took to him like a son or brother who somehow was absent when

RF 35th anniversary portrait of the one and only "Batman" —Adam West — taken for the special "Adam West Remembers Batman" magazine published in 1996.

they passed out the road maps for life.

Wid was friends with a chap named Jim who worked as a writer for the New Jersey advertising agency that hired me. I'd done a few other video editing assignments for the agency and Wid, Jim and I had become friends. Now we were to work closely on the Bell Atlantic project. The script that had been given to me was fine as corporate videos go, and Jim's prolific use of puns to be spoken by the employee participants was well-structured, but the manner in which they were to be woven in the location segments seemed weak to me. The rest of the program would be taped with professional actors who could pull off the gag lines, but I was certain the amateurs would come off too dry. I loved Wid's comic style and began looking for ways to strengthen the routines we were going to be filming.

While I was traveling, I developed a common thread of shooting comedy segments built around the basic script. These bits were developed right out of the silent fashion sketches I had written back in New York for the "Joe Franklin Show." I decided, without consulting with anyone, that since the lines the employees were supposed to say were laden with puns about different hobbies (stay with me...you'll see the foundations of *Famous Monsters'* return in a few more pages) I'd shoot setups that added innocuous sight-gag elements to drive them home.

To give you an example, one sequence had a young girl whose hobby was track-and-field running. We shot her at an indoor track. She was supposed to stand with the interviewer and say "I'm ready to put my best foot forward" then start running. (Foot forward...start running, get it?) Instead, I had her run several times around the track while Wid tried unsuccessfully to stop her by reaching for her sleeve as she passed by. He misses a few, then gets her on the third round. He turns to her and says the scripted line "Are you ready to go the distance for Bell?" She gives the scripted reply. "I'm ready to put my best foot forward!" then bolts off again, stomping down on his foot and leaving him hopping in Three Stooges-style anguish. (Okay, you'd have to see it...but it worked!) I did the whole show that way.

My boss was furious with my self-determined changes to the script until his boss viewed the footage and loved it. "Glad I thought of it!," my boss exclaimed to his. Then, in a totally unexpected move, they asked me to accompany the stage crew on the road for two weeks to document the various performances of the show. During that time, I worked closely with the show's road manager and picked up tips on the art of surviving life in hotels, booking facilities and working around hotel maintenance crews.

comedy tonight

After the tour, I set about the task of trying to figure out where I was going to work again. As it turned out, Wid was friends with a chap named Tony Bon Jovi (cousin of rock star John) who ran a recording studio in the city called Powerstation. Tony had been working with a talented comedienne named Tucci, who was then appearing in the New York production of "Nunsense" off, off Broadway. Tucci had a low-budget "gull-about-town" show on Manhattan cable and Tony wanted to see if we could produce a bigger, more polished show for her. There wasn't much of a budget, but I wrote a pilot in which Tucci entertained a number of wacky New Yorkers in her "Village" apartment. The set was done in a Dalesque style, with a door that just hung by itself, a window that floated in midair, and various paintings and art that floated in space. The rest of the studio set was open air, with no real walls at all. Tucci would have different counterculture bands on to entertain her guests and would interview them after they performed a number, all against the backdrop of a never-ending party at her "apartment."

born of frustration

No sooner had we finished the pilots then the Tucci show went on permanent hiatus because the producer couldn't get needed sponsorship. I decided to try a cable TV show of my own I titled 'Rock On!', this time mixing the only two elements I really knew well—music and models. Sex and rock-and-roll. Not original but certainly bankable. In essence I would produce a series of MTV-style music videos and air them as a package. The idea excited me because it would effectively let me produce a lot of mini-movies, sort of a return to the old 8mm Castle Films but with rock-n-roll soundtracks!

I took a trip to my favorite used book haunt—the Passaic Book Store in Passaic, New Jersey — in search of some old magazines to get some set design ideas. As I walked from one room to the next, a feeling suddenly came over me and I seemed to be drawn to look down at a pile of unmarked boxes sitting on the floor. One of the boxes had a magic marker sign scribbled on it that read "Assorted. $1.00 or less." A casual flip through the stack turned up several old, well-worn copies of—you guessed it—*Famous Monsters of Filmland!*

My God, I thought, I haven't seen one of these in 30 years. (Like most of you, Mom tossed out my rather substantial collection of toys, *FMs*, comics and cards somewhere between the time I left high school and the next time I thought about them.) I bought a few copies and scurried home to enjoy them, feeling just as I had some three decades before when I'd find a new issue at the Bloomfield Soda Fountain.

Now that the Bell project was over, the agency had no further use for Wid either, and he returned to the clubs. One evening in June of 1990 many of his friends gathered for a special performance of his at their local New Jersey hangout and I was invited to come down and see the show. After his performance—which was punctuated at one point by him tossing a stuffed animal into the air which accidentally became caught in the slowly-spinning blades of an overhead fan to which he ad-libbed "Twilight Zone—The Movie!" (sick, but you had to laugh) — several of us were sitting around having beers when he turned to me and said.

"You know, Ray, while I was in California (to appear on "The Comedy Store" program) a friend of mine took me over to this crazy house in Hollywood. The guy there has it filled with all sorts of monster stuff. Somebody should make a video about this stuff. It would really be something."

"Who's the guy?" I asked, not thinking of anyone in particular.

"His name is Forrest Ackerman," Wid replied.

"Forrest J Ackerman?," I asked, "As in the guy from *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine? I just bought some old issues of *FM* not two weeks ago," I said. I hadn't even thought of him or the magazine in 30 years—now this!

Then suddenly an idea popped into my head. Maybe my problem had been solved. I thought I'd much rather put all my energies and talents into a simple video project—do a really first-class job with no sponsor to make my life difficult—then sell copies instead of having to reinvent myself every few weeks

Even a man who is pure
in heart and says his
prayers at night may
become a Rag Berry when the
moon is bright

A prized monster trophy — Curt Siodmak wrote this variation of his immortal poem from THE WOLF MAN to RF after learning that Forry had bilked the legendary 98-year old author out of royalties for an unauthorized "Donovan's Brain" reprint. Siodmak had heard some nt statements vilifying RF and after having been victimized himself, knew that RF wasn't the monster he was portrayed to be and wrote the poem in fitting jest. Read the full story in LIBAS.

with a TV series or deal with the headaches of corporate work. At my request, Wid contacted a friend he knew in Los Angeles who worked at one of the cable TV networks and she called me a few days later with Forry's telephone number.

I sat at my desk, nervously anticipating how I was going to present my idea for a video to Forry—that was assuming I even got to talk to him. I really had no set idea of what I wanted to make or how I would do it, but I picked up the phone and dialed the number.

The die was cast. I didn't know it at the time, but everything I had learned, everything I had been doing for the previous 30-odd years, was about to be thrown into the mix, and my feet had been set in motion on a path I could scarcely have dreamed of before...

what a time it was!

So there you have it, fans. That's how it all began. If you've found the preceding to pique your interest, the chapters that follow in "Life Is But A Scream" chronicle the making of HOORAY FOR HORRORWOOD, the AMAZING WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY videos, our trip to England, a behind-the-screams look at the 1993 35th Anniversary Convention and the 1995 Son of FM Convention, how the magazine was resurrected after we relocated to Horrorwood, and the chain of events that ultimately led to Forry and I parting company and the war that ensued. LIBAS has more information and exposes more "secrets" than the average fan might want to know, but it was written in order to present the facts that were mostly unknown to fandom after I had kept quiet and not spoken out in my own defense publicly for almost 5 years. And sometimes the truth hurts. But knowing the truth doesn't vaporize the adulation one might hold for a figure like Forry. If anything, it strips away the facade and gives you an understanding of the very human man behind the myths.

If you read the original book you'll find the second edition will clarify things more and impart information I wasn't aware of at the time the first edition was published — information that makes a difference about what was really going on. The sequel will expose the events that transpired between October 2000 and today and once you understand what was going on you'll understand why I fought and more importantly why I had to fight.

No sooner was LIBAS released than a number of Forry's minions posted negative review after negative review. They trashed the book (with many stating they hadn't actually read it) but mostly they used the forums to proclaim what a liar and cheat I was. Their vehement attacks are the best testimony that the book is truthful. If it contained the fanciful delusions they claim they wouldn't be so afraid of people reading it. These days — more than 9 years after publication — some of them still post reviews and trash the book as "mean-spirited." They don't have the fortitude to admit that what they really mean is it tells the truth but they'd rather no one know about the "dark side" because they'd rather hide that and protect their self-created claim to fame as Forry's selfless caregivers and comrades. Forry's great tragedy was that he surrounded himself with lowlifes that empowered his darkest dimensions.

Don't be sad over the ending of this incarnation. "A rose by any other name" as William Shockspeare said. You really should read LIBAS. And the sequel. Don't be afraid to know the truth behind the screams. You'll appreciate FMOF's legacy so much more once you understand all the blood, sweat and fears that went into it. I lived it but it's your story, too. Things are rarely the way they appear on the surface, and — in the end — as every high-aspiring mad scientists learns — no good deed goes unpunished.

See you in Freaky Monsters!—RF

(Continued from page 9.....)

made me go to bed I would always sneak out of my bedroom to watch "Shock Theater" which aired on ABC at 11:00 PM. I would wait for each new issue of FM to arrive at the store and would read each one cover to cover. There were always articles about the stars and there were plenty of photos which I promptly cut out and pasted to my bedroom walls much to the chagrin of my mother who later on made me scrape them all off. I wish I had used tape so I could have saved them all.

Norm Toler
Texas

• Trust me, even if you had taped them to the wall you wouldn't have been able to save the photos. You've got to listen to your mother. Mothers know best. Does your mother tells you. A boy's best friend is his mother!—Norman

INSPIRATION

Starting at about age 6 or 7 I had a love of all monsters. At about age 10 your magazine further inspired me filling in all the details of the Horror and Science Fiction films I'd watch late at night on Fridays and Saturdays. Today thanks in part to Famous Monsters of Filmland I'm producing Horror and Science Fiction Host Shows to pass this tradition in film history onto a new generation.

Jay Summers
Ohio

• Not FADE TO BLACK I hope!—Eric

FEMALE OF THE SPECIES

There was this great drug store in Yucaipa California where I used to visit my grandparents. You could buy a 7-UP float for 10 cents and sit and read Famous Monsters at the linoleum and chrome counter. I was about 12 or 13 when I discovered FM and I have thanked my lucky stars since...even though my mother and father were horrified that their little girl was reading FM instead of Nancy Drew!

Linda Ellingson
Wyoming

• Perhaps Nancy would have been more relevant if she'd stayed in the present tense. Young readers might have been interested to see Nancy draw.—Connie

AN FM KONGVERT

First and foremost, let me thank you for the incredible honor you bestowed on me and some of my FM brethren (Stwick, Latamia, Yendor) when you dedicated FM #245 to us. And in so doing, you also surely enhanced the FM legacy to all involved. Having been an FManiac for several decades, I have many fond memories regarding the greatest monster mag in the world.

Discovering FM for the first time with issue #56, Land of the Giants, I tried my best to keep an eye out for future issues. Sadly, most times my search was met with disappointment, as issues were sold out. A couple years after my FM awareness, I was checking out long defunct Dales Used Bookstore in Tampa when I discovered the first 69 issues of FM in the used mag area tagged at a quarter each. Being a kid with minimal funds, I bought as many as I could, based on the coolness of the cover, and road my bike home like a bat into hell at sunrise to scrounge for more money. After borrowing money from my brother, I rushed back to the book store only to find the rest of the first 30 issues gone. Seems some other kid mirrored my discovery, and also was on his way home to get more money. Needless to say, I bought up the rest of the FM bounty and lugged my treasure home in a box resting on my handlebars.

Years later and after FM ended its initial run, I was the lead singer of a rock band called Blade, and my guitarist (another FM fan) and I were discussing our mutual love of our favorite mag. I told him the story I just recounted for you now, when he dropped the bombshell on me that HE was my FM rival at Dales! He even recounted the owner telling him about some other kid (me) who had run home to get more money. What a Karloff-sized mind blower, huh?

More recent, I have to pay homage to the day I stumbled into Barnes and Noble looking for a sports mag, when there on the stands to my utter amazement and joy, sat Famous Monsters of Filmland issue 225. It's impossible to put into words the incredible sense of deja vu I experienced. Once I got home, I called the back issue number and ordered as many as I could, and a love affair too long silenced was reborn.

Mega kudos and thanks to you, Ray, for loving FM enough to bring it back from the grave, and give all us old timers a chance to feel, if even just a little, like a kid again. And kongratulations on persevering to #250 and beyond. And to you Connie, thank you for your incredible kindness and thoughtfulness. I'm forever blown away by the deadicat on, and can guarantee you I will hold that dear for the rest of my life.

Matthew Drinnenberg
Maine

• Your letter and activities on our behalf on the Internet the past few years hold a particular fondness for both Connie and I as well as, I dare say, numerous other FMOF fans. Young Matthew was an unwitting victim of the venomous hate spewed about us by certain ne-ferry-ous forces purporting to advance the wrath of god against the demon ray. But in what he himself attributed to Heavenly intervention, Matthew decided to investigate the facts for himself and discovered he among others had been duped by the anti-Ferry crowd. Today he is among our most stalwart and outspoken defenders and supporters. A special Kong size Kudos to Matt for being of noble character when he learned the truth for himself.—RF

APPRECIATION

I recently read your book, Life Is But A Scream!". What an EYE-OPENER! I'm so sorry for what you've been put through! I was there in the beginning —1958. I joined the club. Was listed in the mag's club member list (around #12, I think). I had a couple of my photos published in monster make up in those early issues. But now you still carry on with that fine tradition. Thank you Ray. I wish you all

(Continued on page 50... .....)

WANTED! MORE READERS LIKE

Kim Huckaby, Arkansas
(Long time fan and supporter and popular presence on the www.filmlandclassics.yulu.com board!)

RAMBLINGS AND REFLECTIONS FROM A VETERAN FANG GANGER!

by eric hoffman

It's been 15 years since the resurrection of FAMOUS MONSTERS was announced of that convention in Arlington, Virginia. 15 years and 50 new issues plus a few paperback, fearbook and 2 coffee table anthologies! Not too bad for a creature that was brought back from the dead and wasn't supposed to be more than one convention commemorative special.

Even though I'd written for a good many of the issues of the first run of FM, as well as some other spin-off 'zines, it was a special thrill when I was hauled back into harness by Ray. There is a special excitement in being able to write about the things you love — creatures of the night who thrilled and chilled you when you first saw them on the movie screen. I have to admit that I envy those who sat in the darkened theater, watching as Boris Karloff made his first entrance as Frankenstein's Monster. Sat mesmerized by Bela Lugosi as he set his sites on another beautiful victim or unleashed his hypnotic 'whammy' on those he sought to enslave. Feeling those chills as the Mummy came to life and took his legendary 'little walk', while the sole witness to all this lost his mind and laughed in insane merriment. Feeling pity for the tormented Larry Talbot as he struggled against the nightmare of the full moon.

After being of rest, so to speak, for many years beginning in the early 1980s, it was a wonderful feeling to be asked to dust away the cobwebs in my brain, rev up the old mad-scientist machines once more and step again into the realm of classic and not-so-classic horrors.

It's been a thrilling ride — a fun ride — traveling through those old familiar caverns, meeting old fiends again and sharing those special feelings about them with your reader. But you, it's been a very bumpy ride, for reasons many of you know.

But with Fearful Leader (my term for RF) at the helm these last 15 years, FM has burned an indelible mark in monster history, bringing back memories to long-time fans and introducing a couple of new generations to the special world of classic horror, science-fiction and fantasy films. I've had a ball all these years writing pieces on whatever films Ray would throw at me (I still have the lumps where some of them landed!). Finding the right stills and seeing the final result in print makes one's sense of pride swell to the height of The Amazing Colossal Man when you read the reactions of readers who let you know that you've done a good job. There is also the special pride in knowing you've helped keep the legacy of FAMOUS MONSTERS alive. Exactly what Fearful Leader has in mind for us next only the infernal gods know but, like Mr. Renfield, I can not escape the call of duty and I'll be on board for the next part of the journey. See you there!

MONSTERS FROM THE ID

Personal reflections from the editor on the legacy of Forrest J Ackerman

RIP VAN FORRY

It's been a difficult decision whether or not to include a personal eulogy in this issue to Forry Ackerman For 13 years I kept his name out of FM in compliance with his directive that it never again appear here. But on occasion of the ending of this magazine I would do posterity a disservice if I allow the myths of his grandeur to stand as the whole truth. I appreciate that FJA had good qualities and was often a positive influence. Of our friendly times I have many fond memories. But much of what Forry led others to believe about him is simply not true. Many talented and influential individuals have contributed their blood, sweat and tears to enrich the SF genre yet none of them place their importance above others FJA's legacy is largely a product of his own invention. I find it disturbing that he has been deified by his disciples and young fans new to our classic monsters universe will be duped by self serving remnants of his entourage trying to cash in on the myths and elevate their own importance as the high priests of Forryana. Perhaps in years to come others will also speak up but the popular concept of FJA is a real-life enactment of "The Emperor s New Clothes" — no one who saw the truth wants to break ranks for fear of being ridiculed

FJA was fond of saying of himself that it was once remarked "If Forry Ackerman hadn't existed it would have been necessary to invent him." The irony is that the Forry Ackerman most fans think they know was perhaps the most important SF figure who n-ever lived. To the uninformed he was an eclectic promotor of fantasy films and books A man who hobnobbed with the greats and labored selflessly on behalf of his great love of the fantastic. Behind the facade was an egomaniac well adept at self-serving manipulation and fabrication. From his earliest emergence on the fledgling SF scene he wanted to be one of the gang but he just wasn't the intellectual equal of those he sought to commune with. His insistent presence became an irritant but was tolerated because, as a child of privilege, he was a valued patron of the financially-strapped genre. But that didn't phase him. He knew how to get what he wanted. He yearned to be a serious writer of merit but lacking in that gift he became a benefactor and attached himself to great emerging talents and usurped their fame by proxy As would be a repeated life pattern with him, his generosity and support came at a price that often was paid with one s soul.

Forry's talent was his enthusiasm. Forry s millstone was that he was full of himself When fate cast him as the editor of FMOF in 1958 the magazine provided him with a forum from which he could infuse himself into pliable young minds unhampered by reality He benefited from a publisher less concerned with journalistic excellence than a colorful product. Jim Warren knew his market and Forry was sufficiently self-absorbed to provide suitable but inexpensive content. So like an omnipresent Fagin he led his "children" into wondrous worlds of fantasy His superficial knowledge of science fiction literature and cinema seemed vast and enlightening to his mainly pubescent pledges After years of bantering about the literary world looking for acceptance Forry found his niche FMOF freed his Walter Mitty He could embellish history

unhampered by facts. He could express his opinions as gospel. He could spin yarns about himself, his history and who he knew. He could embellish or fabricate his accomplishments without limit. Even his nondescript stint as a stateside-stationed clerk in an Army Public Relations office during WWII was transformed by him into a grueling but selfless and bravely-endured service to his country! I don't know of any veterans of actual combat who can recall their term of service down to the years, months, weeks, days, hours and minutes as could Ackerman. (All that was missing from his dossier was receipt of the Purple Heart for a paper cut sustained in the line of duty.) Yet his colorful but concocted autobiography did not matter during the times he reigned. He had a nice assortment of monster movie fotos perfectly suited to his audience. Few actually read the mag.

The problem was that while he enjoyed the influence his position gave him, he didn't want to be a kiddie magazine editor. He fancied himself an important, highbrow literary figure and wanted to be taken seriously by his peers. Issues of FMOF testify that when readers confronted, challenged or questioned his editorship in an adult manner, he would lash out in rambling diatribes defending himself in his preferred unchallengeable medium of print. It's apparent how ill-equipped he was to conduct himself on an adult level. Rather than simply ignore letters of criticism, he was compelled to print them and then chastise the authors in public. He relished adulation and perpetuated myths about himself which, in his mind, had become reality.

He was awarded a special "Hugo" at the First World SF Convention but it was for being "#1 fan" in acknowledgment of his patronage. True to form, he always informed listeners that he was presented with "the first" Hugo award, implying that he was recognized first and foremost among his peers.

He was never an agent in the legal sense of the word but represented himself as being one, routinely authorizing use of others' (usually deceased and obscure authors') works and collecting agent fees when he had no legal authority to do so.

He transposed casual encounters he had with celebrities to intimate friendships and paraded himself to his audience as the liaison between them and those they admired.

He did not coin the term "sci-fi". He took credit for coining the term "sci-fi". The term itself had been bantered about the SF community (even by the likes of Robert Heinlein) as early as the 1940s, mostly in private correspondence and usually referred to hack writers who were polluting the genre. (It's actually pronounced "skiffy.") Forry just broke private ranks and used the term in public. But in fairness I never heard him actually claim to have coined the term. He always referred to the genre as "scientifiction" — the term coined by his hero, Hugo Gernsback. When asked about sci-fi's origins he would simply tell listeners that one day he heard some talk about hi-fi (high fidelity sound) on the radio, then he looked in the mirror and there on the tip of his tongue were the little words "sci-fi." He didn't say he created it. He simply didn't deny it when others assumed he did. He wanted to be like Gernsback and being credited with coining a catchy term put him in that company. It's interesting to note that in Warren's short-lived "Spacemen" (Forry's attempt to edit a serious "scientifiction" magazine) and even in the first run of FMOF, the term "sci-fi" is curiously absent.

He accumulated his "collection" primarily from gifts and coaxing people to donate items to his "museum," yet he didn't preserve or take care of any of it. While impressive in size, it was in dismal condition. His collection was his spider's web. He opened his home to strangers to view the collection in order to bask in their awe of him and reassert his importance.

Forry was perhaps the most self-loathing individual I have ever known. He shared many deeply personal thoughts about his life and his frustrations with me (mostly about his early years), yet he was strangely proud to relay stories of adventures he'd had that most people would be ashamed to recall, let alone recount out loud. He claimed to be an atheist yet bragged about his affiliation with Church of Satan founder and practitioner Anton LaVey. He bragged of participating in an experiment in cannibalism courtesy of a physician member of the cult. He recalled with impish glee incidents of inappropriate encounters with other people's children. I tempered my disgust at these indiscretions by convincing myself that his talking about such things was reserved for his close friends and since he'd probably related those tales to people I knew who were quite respectable and admired and they still maintained a relationship with him, I should also overlook the tales as emotionally developmental handicaps. He needed to assert his uniqueness.

Our relationship prospered for 5 years for one primary reason. I was not one of his fans. I was not impressed by his history or his holdings. I treated him professionally and satisfied his passion to be presented in our projects in a respectable but personable light. I saw his "bad boy" side, his childlike lack of responsibility and stupidly thought I could change him and elevate his better qualities. But there was one tragic element in Forry that was impossible to surmount: his insatiable ego.

He surrounded himself with low-lifes. Year after year they would come and go: new assistants, new dinner companions, new fawns. The one thing I noted they all had in common was they played to and fed Forry's most destructive demons. They sang "how great thou art" as used his own money to bestow gifts and favor upon him, filled his vices, and joyfully took up free residence where they could serve their master while helping themselves. And help themselves they did! They were willing and able to let him and help him destroy what might have been glorious and fulfilling senior years to insure their hold on him. How many among them thought that for their trouble they'd inherit the mansion, the collection, the artifacts and the bank accounts. In the end, they inherit the wind.

Yes, Forry could not tolerate anything less than being adored. He was a master at playing the victim. When I dared violate his pretense by reminding him that he owed his first notoriety to Jim Warren and his second to me, that was Cardinal sin. The full fury of his ego was unleashed and he nurtured with delight the ignorance of his followers eager to avenge for him. For those who want to see the true legacy that ego sowed, look at the passionate hatred still being spread by his devotees against anyone who dares not worship their god. Proverbs 6:16-19 comes to mind. If you think my comments unkind, I beg your pardon but I simply don't believe that death grants one automatic impunity for life.

But for me, I'm not angry. I'm saddened. Saddened because Forry Ackerman was truly a lost soul. Saddened because he was possessed of such innate ability to foster enthusiasm in others, yet unable to deny his dark side. Saddened because — for a brief time anyway — I was successful at reaching the Jekyll under his Hyde, and it was Jekyll who — unhampered by ego — was the exuberant ambassador of the awe-inspiring and the wondrous, the man who yearned for acceptance. But for us, FMOF ends here: the victim of his ego, and for me the words of Marc Antony are apropo — "I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him."

I wish it could have been otherwise, but, like many of you, my fondest remembrances are of the man who never lived.

Comments from the front line by connie:

A SCREAM AT THE E

When Ray first walked into my life, or rather I walked into his, I knew nothing really about Famous Monsters of Filmland. I had seen the magazine as a young girl a few times but couldn't tell you for sure where. I did however know the movies and the genre it celebrated and found them far more appealing to me than the "scary" movies of today. I was introduced to Ray by a friend at a book signing for "Life is But a Scream!" in Long Beach, California. All I can say now, in retrospect, is "Wow, who would have thunk it?"

Knowing nothing of the feud in fandom when I was introduced to him, I was able to meet Ray on a very different basis than most. I carried no torch for the magazine, no torch for Ray, no torch for Forry and I was not looking for a relationship. I am not sure that I was looking for anything actually, he just happened along. What I found that day was a delightfully funny and interestingly serious individual who was hard on the outside and soft on the inside, kind of like a tootsie roll pop. I don't know if that is really how he had always been or if I brought that out, but I could not stop listening and talking to him. He was intelligent and mesmerizing and we talked for almost 18 hours that first meeting. I think it is the first time in my life and the last that I found anyone that interesting that I could listen that long to what they had to say.

We talked about life, politics, religion, love, movies, theater, music, photography, celebrities—everything EXCEPT Famous Monsters. From that first meeting, I never thought that I would become the public advocate for FM or for Ray Ferry. It just sort of happened.

After a few days of phone conversations and casual meetings, I finally was privy to the information about the fight with Forry and the bankruptcy filing and the rest of the malarkey that surrounded Ray's life. I felt so helpless. I read all these accounts on line about him, how he was so hated and such a nasty individual, yet, I had never seen him that way and still don't. Even from our first meeting, he started to show great concern over my well being, knowing that I was at a crossroads in my life and wanting to help me figure out what I wanted to do with my life, or at least the next week of it. With all that was going wrong in his life why he was worried about mine I will never know, but that is the side of him that no one knew and perhaps never will. Perhaps I was just lucky and had missed that side of him or perhaps, other s just happened to have caught him in one of those moments of anxiousness when someone has pushed his buttons and all is going nuts around him and he loses sight of his purpose and begins to lash out. Yes, fiends, Ray can be a force to be reckoned with when he's motivated to

Ms. Famous Monsters at 50! (Foto by RF)

be, but to this day, I have never seen him lash out until he was pushed to it. I am his buffer now and wish I could have been around to be his buffer before all of the baloney started. I am sure that I could have made a difference somewhere.

living with real horrors

Many times I would watch as Ray frantically tried to figure out the right thing to do when he was under attack, even by the very people who were supposed to be looking out for him. I remember vividly when his bankruptcy trustee told him either he for him so he could get the trademark from his former lawyer or they would seize his home and throw him out in retaliation. He refused. I was there the day they evicted him when he had to leave behind so many things that he had worked so hard for. Between Forry's lawyer and the greedy self serving trustee, they

ND OF THE WORLD

wanted Ray's life and blood and they made it apparent that nothing would have made them happier than to see him do himself in. But he stood strong and tall that day as he walked away to rebuild his life as best he could. It was then I realized that I loved him more than I realized was possible. I knew that he was not the person I read about. I read the files and I knew that something was terribly amiss with his court cases, but there was little or nothing he could do about it alone. I realized that I could help him. I was not about to let this man—this intelligent, funny and quirky man—give up on his dreams or his life. Together we made the best of it and kept going.

Because we fought back we were chased and hounded by people who wanted to keep us quiet. We were forced to live in motel rooms, spend some nights living in the car and yes, we were hungry and scared sometimes. But despite all the hardships we survived and we moved forward. When others would have surely given up and sank deep into depression, we kept going.

all he can stand

After Ray decided he'd had enough of the trustee's corruption and decided to take back his life by putting out FM #236, I became the public voice for FM. I set up my own business and began taking orders and took charge of customers while Ray spent his time researching and writing legal briefs to fight his trustee by day and writing new issues of the magazine by night. Anyone who thinks our life was a picnic has never been a victim of war, has never had to struggle against powerful forces determined to destroy your life. There were times when I wanted to scream at some of the fans who would call or write damning Ray and later damning me over some issue they ordered and claimed they never got, especially when most times it turned out they'd either had a family member who picked their copy up or were just trying to get a freebie to sell on ebay. But I tried to remember that it's the situation that had them upset and frustrated. I realized that most of the fans of this genre are really nice people. They've been confused and polluted by a few genuinely vile 'fans' on the internet who have made it their life's calling to try and destroy everything FM, and especially Ray.

Famous Monsters is just the name of a magazine but to some folks out there, it's their childhood revisited and their childhood included Uncle Forry. He became a part of their family, just like all of you have become a part of ours. It was hard for them to accept that Uncle Forry and Ray Ferry couldn't be friends and make up. It's a shame that it wasn't possible, but as I look back on my conversations with the attorneys and with Forry himself, I see that nothing could have changed the way things went. By the time Forry may have had a change of heart the people controlling him were going to continue to do anything, no matter how wrong, to get what they were after.

as the sun sets...

So now that we are at the end of Famous Monsters of Filmland, I find myself actually feeling relieved. I appreciate that some fans—those whose primary interest has been collecting — will desert the tomb and spend many nights to come huddled in dark dank dungeons flipping through shinny polybagged copies, fingers wrapped in smooth cotton gloves, wiping their sweaty brows with a sleeve as they count and recount their treasure. Yes, I will miss even those fans. But I really can't say I will miss Famous Monsters of Filmland. It has brought far more tears than it has happiness. It's just the name of a magazine and that name has become tainted and perhaps even cursed. I am weary of the constant battle to clear up misconceptions. I don't know how many times I have had to explain to someone that Forrest Ackerman never owned the magazine or the trademark. I gave up trying to rid the internet of all the lies spread about Forry and Ray. It's an impossible task. The ignorant truly shall inherit the earth.

It's been my pleasure to be a part of the gang that has brought you FM. I've felt a kinship with many of you like no other I have felt in all my years of different jobs and different professions. Most of you have been very kind and caring. But it's time that Ray and I walk away from this great burden and move on to things that are more enjoyable and more reflect our tastes and personalities.

I will be at filmlandclassics.yuku.com as always to bring you my commentary and noose and just to chat with you from time to time. I hope that you all know just how much I have always enjoyed our conversations and how much I look forward to the BEAST days ahead.

This final issue of Famous Monsters is not the end for me or for Ray and it should not be the end for you. Freaky Monsters is a new beginning. A return to what classic monster fandom should be, free of the hate mongers and villainy of rebel rousers and troublemakers. We've heard from a lot of fans who can't wait to celebrate. We hope you'll be there with us.

(Continued from page 46.....)

the best. I was raised on FM and have been highly influenced by it. I still have my Lon Cheney make up kit my Dad helped me create back in 1958! Again, Kudos to you and thanks so much for all that you do!

Jimmy VanHolleheke
Michigan

• I've heard similar comments from most fans who have read LIBAS. It's purpose wasn't to chastise but to clarify. The truth doesn't diminish the good things but certainly puts it all in perspective. Fangs for sticking with us —RF

NUMBER 1 DAD

One day when I was about 7 (in the 1950s) my father brought home this great magazine filled with monsters and aliens. He said "I know you will like this". Since I was already from age 5 a horror/science fiction fan, I loved it. I think my dad even read it himself after buying it. So my dad bought the 1st and 2nd issues of "Famous Monsters" and from then on I ran down to the local drugstore at the 1st of every month and kept collecting FM. My collection grew very large. I even joined the fan club and I was the first among my pals to be on those great pages.

Guy LaBelle
Texas

• If you had to run down each month I hope your local drugstore was close —RF

WORLD OF WONDER

In a word, WOW! This was the seminal — the ONLY monster mag I read religiously as a kid!

Terrence Sellers
New Jersey

• I read religiously too but in my case it was required —Father Merrin

CHARTER FAN

The latest news prompted me to pull "Life Is But A Scream!" off the shelf and give it another read. I never tire of reminiscing of those early years in the rebirth of FM. I also recall the excitement and anticipation I had when I first saw an add for "Hooray for Horrorwood". I must have been one of the first ones to piece an order because the tape came in a hard clamshell case in a box with a "Mecca Magic" return address stamped on it. Its hard to believe that was over 18 years ago!!!

I also vividly remember buying the "CardecCards" at Forbidden Planet in New York City. These too were in the old snap top clear plastic cases with photocopied wrappers. Of course, I still have all this stuff and treasure it.

But getting back to LIBAS, it never ceases to amaze me what you were able to accomplish and how successful you were in bring back FM in a big way starting off with the best of best convention and the unveiling of the reborn FM. Like you said in the book, you had to be there!! I always look forward to your new material and projects. The FM #1 poster I bought was outstanding!

I'm behind you 100% and always will be, whatever you choose to do.

Doug Whitsnack
New Jersey

• Although I've published a longer version of your letter before, I'm running it here in what I think is a fitting finale. You and son Michael have the distinction in my legend of being MY first qualified fans, independent from the magazine itself. And I find it flattering —if not amazing— that you have never shrunk from that position or ever been anything less than fully supportive. You two, along with the thousands of others who have come on board and shared your enthusiasm these past 17 years are what's kept us going. On this occasion let's not lament. This is not an ending but a beginning. What we all cherish will continue simply with a new name. And the new beginning affords all of us a chance to relive the magic and keep the flame of monster fandom burning. Today, more than ever, we need that retreat, and for as long as our fans want we'll be here to share those monsterific memories with you all —RF

THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS

I was 10 years old and at my godparents house. Their son had a copy of issue #37. I'm sorry to say this but I stole his copy of FM. I was ashamed of myself. After all these years I regret what I'd done but that's what got me hooked on FM magazine and still to this date — 37 years later — I still have that copy of Famous Monsters!

Danny Orozco
North Carolina

• Curious you should send your letter now. Only a week earlier we received the following letter at our offices:

"I always loved FM and used to get every issue without fail. Not long ago I was perusing my collection and was horrified that I had every issue except #37. Then it hit me! I recall that one day many years ago when I was about 11, some friends of my parents came for a visit. They had their son Danny with them. I never let anyone see my FM collection but I made an exception that day. He's the only one who's ever been near it except me. My parent's friends didn't come to visit much after that day and I know 37 years is a long time to hold a grudge but I swear if I ever find that sticky-fingered Danny again...

Sheriff James Bianchi
Georgia

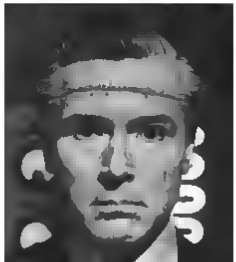
WEB STAR'S DICTION SCARY

Saddened to hear your going to stop publishing Famous Monsters. Have you thought about keeping it going in an on line version?

Randy Klein
South Dakota

• No. We prefer printed magazines. In the words of the great Transylvanian philosopher/printer, Rene Descarted, "I ink, therefore I am". But I am aware that many others are considering publishing on-line editions due to shrinking distribution outlets and declining sales at printed publications. I heard that SCARY MONSTERS experimented with an on-line version but scrped the idea because the pixels of their pages smeared off the monitor screen — Johannes Guttenberg

MYSTERY PHOTO #243



For the Mystery Photo in FM #243, we offer this parting thought especially for our over-50 male readers:

"Transylvania Medical College today announced a startling new outpatient procedure for men suffering from baldness. The procedure provides a complete head of hair instantly."

Watch for new Mystery Fotos coming in FREAKY MONSTERS!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU, MONSTER LOVER!

Write to us at our new internet address at www.freakymag.com

GOING FAST! BETTER GRAB 'EM WHILE THEY LAST!

We have a limited supply of back issues of Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine left. Once our current inventory is gone, that's it. Don't miss your last chance to grab up any of these fangtastic back issues while you can!

VISIT WWW FILMLAND CLASSICS COM TO SEE OUR COMPLETE SELECTION!

HISTORIC 250TH AND FINAL ISSUE!

AND THE BEAST GOES ON!

Don't chew your foot off, classic monster lover! Editor Ray Ferry and the Fang Gang continue to bring you the top terror treats from the Ghoulden age of Horror in a brand new magazine called FREAKY MONSTERS! Each issue is packed with fangtastic fotos, articles, reviews and monsterific fun! To get your copies be sure to visit

www.freakymag.com

BORIS KARLOFF AS THE MONSTER IN BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)
Original Painting by Rolf Armstrong
(See the original now on display at the Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA)